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(Ruyter)











LIFE OF  
LIEUT.-ADMIRAL DE RUYTER













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L I F E

OF

LIEUT.-ADMIRAL DE RUYTER

BY

G. GRINNELL-MILNE

L O N D O N

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER & CO., LTD.

PATERNOSTER HOUSE, CHARING CROSS ROAD

1896





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## P R E F A C E .

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THERE is no popular life of de Ruyter in English, for the brief notices of him in the “*Encyclopædia Britannica*” and “*Chambers’s Encyclopædia*” can hardly be so described.

This is all the more strange, as, during part of his career, Holland was the greatest seafaring nation in Europe, and de Ruyter was the greatest of the Dutch Admirals.\*

So much were Englishmen of that day impressed by his great abilities, and his simple and manly character, that an English biography appeared soon after he died, published by Dorman Newman, “for J. B.,” in 1677.†

\* There is a general agreement that de Ruyter is the foremost figure, not only in the Dutch service, but among all the naval officers of that age. Mahan’s “*Influence of Sea Power upon History*,” p. 116.

† In 1676 there was published in Amsterdam “*Leeven en Daden Der Doorluchtighste Zee-Helden*,” by V. D. B. (Lambert van den Bos), dedicated to de Ruyter’s son. This contains his first biography.



It is now almost unknown outside of the British Museum, but the Dutch "Life of de Ruyter," by Gerard Brandt, which was published in Amsterdam in 1687, remains the chief authority on the subject.

Two other Dutch biographies of importance, by Belinfante, 1852, and Looman, 1860, are well known in Holland.\*

The following pages, representing with some additions a Lecture prepared for the working-men of Sydenham, are therefore offered, not as the work of an expert in naval warfare, but as a simple story of the life of a very great man. The lessons of such a life and of that portion of the histories of his own and of this country, in which he played a part, tell themselves.

The importance of the command of the sea to the greatest maritime community, and the necessity of maintaining an efficient guard over the commerce of a State whose dominions lie in both hemispheres, are self-evident in any clear view of the life of de Ruyter.

\* De Liefde's "Famous Dutch Admirals," of which an English translation was published by Strahan & Co., presupposes a general knowledge of incidents and dates in the reader which he occasionally does not possess, and is sadly wanting in dates and figures. It is now out of print.



Every care has been taken to give a fair picture of the great contest between the Dutch and English, and evidence on both sides has been duly sifted before an opinion has been given. Where doubt still exists, both stories are told.

To the writer's English and Dutch friends, he is much indebted for their kindly help in this and other matters relating to the work.

The name Holland, when used in these pages without the prefix or limitation of State, or Province, means the Seven United Provinces. When qualified as State, or Province, it refers only to the Province from which the whole country was eventually to take its name.







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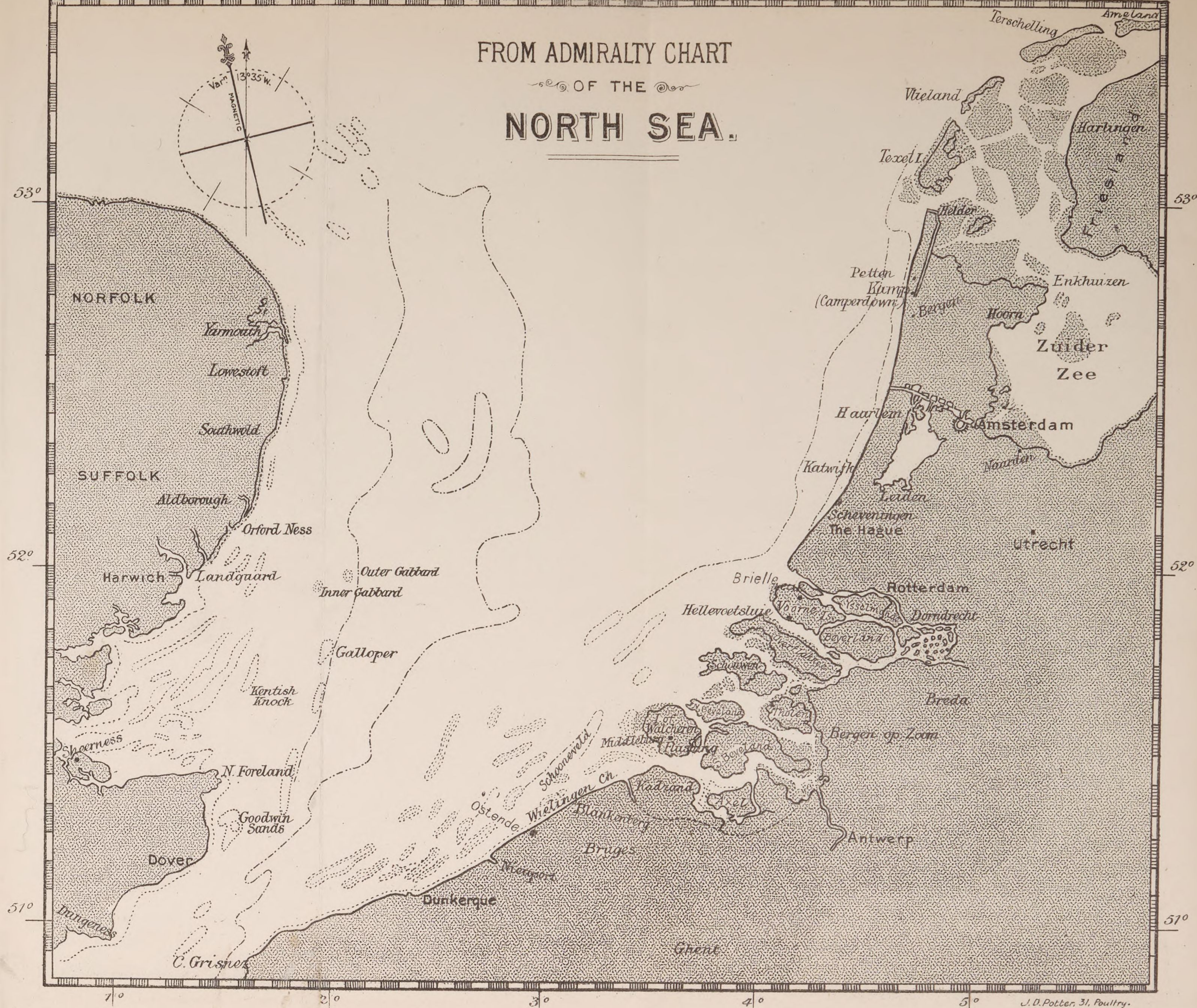






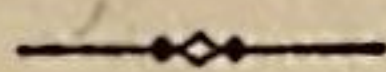


FROM ADMIRALTY CHART  
OF THE  
**NORTH SEA.**





# LIFE OF LIEUT. ADMIRAL DE RUYTER.



## APPRENTICESHIP IN NAVIGATION.

YOUTH—ARMED TRADING—MATRIMONY.

MICHEL ADRIAANSZON DE RUYTER sprang from the very poorest of the people.

There is a story told by “J. B.” in Dorman Newman’s book, to the effect that he was descended from a Scotch trooper serving in Holland, but this is not countenanced by the Dutch writers.

His grandfather was certainly a man called Michiel, who had no surname, and therefore styled himself from his own father’s name, the son of Adriaan, or in full, Michiel Adriaanszoon.

This Michiel Adriaanszoon served his time in the army, and did his share of fighting against the Spaniards through that most heroic of all struggles, in which Holland made herself a great



nation. He had settled on a very small farm at Bergen op Zoom, in the province of Brabant.

One incident of his life is preserved. Besides his wife, he had one servant to help him; two horses formed his principal stock in trade. These were stolen from him, so violent were the manners of the time, by men of his own regiment, which seemed to be short of horses; but when he had discovered their whereabouts, he promptly stole them back, and hid them at a distance from his own buildings. The military robbers, suspecting Michiel, and unable to get the animals again, now set fire to his house. In the excitement of the moment the little household forgot the baby, but the wife, rushing through the flames, found the child and threw him out of the window to Michiel, who, with the servant, stood below, and caught him in the blanket. The mother jumped out afterwards, and was also saved.

The kindness of the townsmen of Bergen op Zoom alone helped Michiel through his troubles.

The child was named Adriaan Michielszoon, and he, after commencing life as a sailor, in time became a beer carrier in Flushing. He had married in 1598 Alida Jans, who died with her first child, and, if we may credit Brandt, he



married again (in 1601) another Alida Jans. By this last marriage he had eleven children, of whom the fourth Michiel Adriaanszoon de Ruyter, born at eight in the morning on the 24th of March, 1607, alone concerns us. The boy got the surname of de Ruyter from his mother, whose father was a trooper, and was therefore called de Ruyter, *i.e.* the rider.

No spot could have been chosen fitter to nurse the spirit of a future admiral than Flushing. Looking out morning or evening across the yellow sands of the Isle of Walcheren, on which the town is built, his eye could catch sight of the Dutch Argosies returning laden with the wealth of the Indies, or passing down channel with the output of Dutch markets.

The province of Zealand had produced its full share of the famous "Zee helden" (sea heroes), who carried the guardian flag of Holland to protect her commercial fleets.

In the streets of the old town the solid burgers, whose traffic was across sea, would impress the young mind with the wonders of the world beyond the water, and encourage that business energy so firmly rooted in the Dutch, and because associated with a character so simple and so



open, often misread by the more complex English nature, which constantly clothes the idea of a Dutchman in a short square body seated on a barrel, and eternally engaged in the study of a clay pipe of abnormal dimensions.

Never was there a lazier, more inattentive schoolboy than young de Ruyter, but was a trick to be played on the master or a boy to be fought, none more ready for the fun than he. At ten years of age, when workmen were repairing the principal steeple of Flushing, he climbs the scaffolding, and then mounts the ladder to the cross on the dizzy pinnacle above. Honest burgers of the good town see a little figure there, calling out some boyish impertinence, while he waves his cap without the slightest indication of fear. Now, tired of his fun, he prepares to descend. The upturned faces of the crowd afford no encouragement, for it can be seen that the workmen have removed the ladder, and the boy must slide down the steeple as best he can. With his nail-shod boot he kicks away a slate, and his foot rests on the wooden bar that was under it, then his other foot is lowered, and again a slate crashes into the street, while he still finds footing on the thin supports beneath, and so as slate by



slate falls, de Ruyter slowly moves down the steeple, reaches the scaffolding, and from thence the street, where his father takes possession of him. Little did the stolid townsmen realize that a great admiral had signalled his good morrow to the world, and if they had known so much, they would wrongly have argued an overweening ambition in the boy, the very thing which was not to be a feature in the character of the man. Courage and cool-headed, unerring resource in the presence of great danger, then and always were the characteristics of de Ruyter. Soon after the incident of the steeple, the boy was put to work in the rope-making business of the Lampens, at a stuiver (a penny) a day; but as he was still longing for the sea, and as the ropemakers were quite willing to let him go, he went in his eleventh year, as boatswain's mate's boy.\* At once the restless ne'er-do-well is converted into a hard-working, willing, intelligent sailor. He has found his path in life—a tempestuous one—but he is content to follow it.

His companion in the first voyage is said to

\* The old rope-making establishment, now disused, still stands, and the wheel de Ruyter worked, long known as "het Ruitertje," the little Ruyter, has been preserved, and is the property of the Zeeuwsche Genootschap, in Middelburgh.



have been a little negro, baptized Jan Company (John Company), in accordance with the custom of the Dutch East India Company, of whom we shall hear more, forty years later on.

In his fifteenth year, 1622, de Ruyter, with some other sailors, is called upon to do some fighting on shore. He first figured as a gunner and was sent into Cleves, and then to Bergen op Zoom, which the Spanish General Spinola was besieging. The full pay which he received, though so young, proves, if proof were wanted, his courage and activity. He managed to buy a horse, and distinguished himself in the sorties which the garrison made. About this time he became a boatswain on a man of war, and again his courage marks him out from among his comrades. In boarding a Spanish vessel he was wounded in the head by a pike, the only wound, it has been said, that he received from an enemy, till his death.

Shortly after this he was taken prisoner and landed on the Biscay coast, whence, with two companions, he made his way home on foot through Spain, France, and Belgium. Each of them took his turn at begging during their weary march.



His old friends the Lampsens, Cornelis, and Adriaan, now gave de Ruyter a post on one of their vessels. He remained with them for some years, in which, we are told, he applied himself carefully to the study of navigation.

The attention which he gave to all matters bearing on seamanship during these years of his life, of which we have barely notes enough to furnish the headings of chapters, was to bear fruit in his consummate handling of the fleets committed to his care at a later date.

We now get a glimmering of what appears clearly in subsequent years, namely, the fact that de Ruyter was beginning to reconcile himself to the idea of home life, for we find him marrying Marie Velters of Gripskerk, on the 16th of March, 1631.

Marie's death left him a childless widower ten months later. De Ruyter now became a pilot for a time, but in 1633 he went to Greenland (as steersman, says Looman) on the *Green Lion* (G. Brandt, p. 6).

As captain, in 1635, he sailed for the Straits of Magellan, where he narrowly escaped shipwreck among the icebergs. From the icebergs to matrimony was a natural transition.



Our hero for a second time braved the holy state in 1636 with Cornelie Engels of Flushing. For fourteen years their mutual happiness was complete, and only terminated with Cornelie's death. The year after this marriage de Ruyter was again on the sea, commanding one of two vessels fitted out by the merchants of Flushing to cruise in the Channel, which was infested by French pirates from Dunkirk. A mutiny soon stopped his cruising, after he had taken one vessel says Brandt, and he was chased home by thirteen Dunkirk privateers. His biographers know nothing about the years 1638 and 1639, but in 1640 and 1641, commanding one of the Lampsens vessels, he went out to Brazil twice.

His careful nautical observations corrected several errors in the maps at that time in use in Holland, and the Dutch maps were then the best in the world. Among other things he proved that the Antilles were about 130 leagues nearer the east than the geographers had said. Hardly was de Ruyter a month at home, when he was appointed captain of the *Haas* (the hare) and rear-admiral\* of a squadron sent to assist

\* More correctly described in Dutch as "Schout-by-nacht."



the Portuguese (now independent of Spain) in their struggle with that power. Holland sent fifteen warships, and Portugal was to provide as many more.

The Portuguese fleet not being at Lisbon, the Dutch cruised along the coast to meet it. Between Ayamonte and Cape St. Vincent, their vessels in three divisions swept a line of about twelve leagues of sea. When near Cape St. Vincent, about midnight on the 3rd of November, the fires of the Spanish fleet were seen. There were with the Spaniards some ships from Dunkirk, making their numbers up to twenty-four sail.

By eight next morning the Dutch had brought on the action, and one of their vessels being wedged in between two of the enemy, immediately lost her foremast. De Ruyter came to her rescue, but his vessel was speedily pierced in six places under water, and he was obliged to retire to stop the leaks; when this was accomplished, he again passed through the Spanish fleet in his endeavour to assist another Dutch vessel, which had replaced him and had been sunk soon after by the enemy. Although some of the Dutch captains had kept disgracefully aloof



from the fight, those who engaged, after a hard struggle and the loss of two ships, compelled the Spaniards to retire. The Spanish loss was said to be two ships and 1100 men. De Ruyter, whose vessel was so full of water as to spoil his powder, was the most conspicuous figure in the fight. The Dutch did not pursue the Spaniards, but went north to Lisbon, where de Ruyter's vessel was beached and found to be even more damaged than had been suspected. Nothing but his care had saved her. The King of Portugal showered honours upon his Dutch protector. Early in January, 1642, the fleet sailed for Flushing, where it arrived after a stormy voyage in thirteen days.

De Ruyter again entered the service of the Lampsens in 1643, and remained with them till 1651, making a great number of voyages in that time to the Mediterranean and the West Indies, etc., but owing to his modesty in destroying all his notes of these busy years, when he became more famous, for fear that historians should spin long stories out of them, we know very little of his adventures in this period.

In 1648 the seal was affixed to the independence of the United Provinces by the treaty of Munster,



by which Spain, after eighty years of almost continuous war, recognized them as free and sovereign States. At the beginning of that war, Spain held the highest position among the nations of the world. At the end of it, Holland had almost driven her flag from the seas, and was for the moment the greatest power on the ocean. De Ruyter lost his much-loved second wife, September 25, 1650 (Brandt, p. 14). He had already decided to give up the sea, and it may well have been his intense grief which drove him forth to the last of his trading voyages in the following year, to the Barbary coast and the Antilles.

Among the anecdotes relating to the Barbary voyages which reach us without dates, but attach to the period ending with the year 1651, are the following.

Returning from Salee—then a very important port of Barbary—he was stopped by a fleet of French pirates. Going on board the captain's vessel to inquire the reason, de Ruyter was asked significantly whether he felt thirsty. He replied that he would drink willingly. "Wine or water?" inquired his captor. "If I'm a prisoner," said de Ruyter, "give me water ;



but if I'm free, give me wine," and the pirate, struck with his ready confidence, gave him wine and his freedom. Some years after de Ruyter himself captured the pirate.

It was de Ruyter's custom on his voyages to trade for his employers, and on one occasion the chief of a town in Barbary offered him very much less than value for a piece of English cloth which he had with him, and an angry discussion was the result. De Ruyter continued to refuse to take the price named, and said he would prefer to give the cloth away. This added to the heat of the interview, and de Ruyter was threatened with imprisonment, but in vain. "Were I on my ship," he said, "you would not threaten me thus." He would not accept the terms, and the chief was forced to retire to another room, gnashing his teeth and stamping his feet with rage. Some time after he returned, and finding de Ruyter still firm, he turned to his friends and said, "See how generous and faithful this Christian is to his masters; would any of you do as much for me if occasion offered?" He entered into the most solemn vows of friendship with de Ruyter, who was henceforth treated with the greatest consideration by the Moors.



Another occasion was to render him famous on the Barbary coast, when he drove before him on the *Salamander* five Algerian privateers who had attacked him off the town of Salee (in full sight of the Moors, who thronged the shores), and triumphantly entered the harbour. Then the enthusiastic populace insisted on conducting him on horseback through the town. When, at another time, he was shipwrecked near Salee, the Moors proved their real admiration for him by collecting all the fragments of his ship and all the cargo, so that he lost nothing but the vessel. Having bought an old boat and repaired her, he managed to reach home with a good profit.

The dangers of navigation at this period were increased for the Dutch by the privateers with which the French from Dunkirk, though in alliance with the Seven Provinces, attacked their trade, and it required every artifice of trading captains to escape them. Provided with the flags of the principal European nations, a Dutch trader would be seen flying the English flag at one moment, or the French at the next, or would alter her sails to resemble a man-of-war (the merchant ship carried guns), as occasion suited.



Returning with a cargo of butter from Ireland, de Ruyter was being caught by a well-armed privateer, when as quickly as possible he smeared his entire deck with butter, and ordered all hands below. The pirates boarded, but not a man could keep his feet on the buttery deck, and they were glad to get back to their own vessel, leaving de Ruyter's mysterious craft, with deck as slippery as ice and not a man visible, to sail away unmolested.

In a modern account of this occurrence—de Liefde's "Famous Dutch Admirals" (Eng. ed. out of print)—it is said that the superstitious fear of the Dunkirk sailors was the cause of their leaving so quickly the deck on which they could not stand.

When de Ruyter returned from the last of his trading voyages in 1651, his innate fondness for the simple home life, the sight of the motherless children, the vacant place in the home, and perhaps the thought of the entire happiness of his two former marriages, drew him again into thoughts of matrimony.

Anne van Gelder, the widow of Jan Pauluszoon, one of the Lampsen's captains, of the same brave, poor hardworking class as de Ruyter, became



his third wife early in 1652. Now, for the third time, the marriage vow was to go hand in hand with the happiness of the gallant sailor. Two daughters were the fruit of this union. It was customary at this time for Dutch parents, shortly after the birth of a child, to receive their friends during several days, when a certain drink called "kandeel" was provided, among the ingredients of which were egg, brandy, and nutmeg. The happy father, arrayed in a cap trimmed with lace, and known as a "kraamheerenmuts," or gentleman's confinement cap, stirred and served the beverage himself.\* The reception and the "kandeel" are still institutions in Holland, though the father's part in the ceremony has lapsed. De Ruyter was now in his forty-fifth year; his naturally sound constitution had resisted all the strains to which it had been subjected. Brandt's description of his general appearance agrees with, amplifies, and strengthens the presentment of the portraits.† Of

\* Dr. Schotel, *Oude Zeden in Gebruiken*, quoting from "The Ten Delights of Matrimony," a Dutch work dated 1678.

† The principal portrait of de Ruyter, is the large picture by Ferdinand Bol in the Mauritshuis, at the Hague. In the same collection there is another less important one, by the same master, two pictures dealing with the "four days"



medium height, the robustness of his well-made frame withdrew nothing from his natural agility, while his large square forehead dominating the piercing brown eyes which looked forth from a rather high-coloured face, accentuated the expression of power in the forcible lower lip and chin. The short, thick moustache, turned up at the ends (as Brandt says, in the manner of the earlier mariners), allowed the genial curves

fight," by Wm. van de Velde de Jonge, who was present on that occasion, and a picture of the burning of the English fleet at Chatham, by Jan Peeters (1624 to 1677). The van der Hoop collection contains another de Ruyter picture by Bol. At the de Ruyter Exhibition in Flushing in 1894, which was initiated by the energy of the well-known and popular Burgomaster, Mr. Tutein Nolthenius, the following portraits were lent by the owners:—

De Ruyter in his 48th year, Berchmans, the property of Jhr mr. van Riemsdijk.

De Ruyter, by unknown, the property of Koninklyk Instituut voor de Marine te Willemsoord.

De Ruyter, copy of Bol's portrait, the property of the province of Zeeland.

A representation of the principal admirals, de Ruyter in the middle, the property of the Douair, Jhr. de Jonge *née* Kock, at the Hague, 1669.

Action at Chatham, 1667, Jan van Leyden, the property of the Zeeuwsch Gen. te Middelburg.

Sea fight at Messina, the property of the de Ruyter de Wildt family, Flushing.



of the upper lip, almost amounting to a smile, to bear their full value in the impression conveyed by his eminently striking physiognomy. A slight tremor was noticeable at times in his limbs, the result of having eaten a poisonous fish in his youth, but his constitution was powerful to the end of his life, and enabled him to sustain any fatigue and exposure. At last, in 1652, de Ruyter expects to give up his old life. He will renounce the sea for ever. But hardly has he settled down at home, when a cause more powerful than himself cancels all his resolutions. His country, at war with England, calls him to command an important section of the fleet, and duty—not ambition—always more powerful than personal comfort with him, compels him to go.



## APPRENTICESHIP IN NAVAL WARFARE.

THE ENGLISH QUARREL—PROTECTION OF TRADE—COMMAND OF THE  
SEA—VAN TROMP KILLED—DEFEAT—PEACE.

To understand the causes of England's quarrel with Holland, we must look back some years from 1652.

No nation had ever evolved from smaller beginnings such a commercial and political ascendancy as that which the Dutch had now attained. They had to create a large part of the very land on which they existed—and by unceasing efforts alone could they keep the sea from again submerging it. Neither the climate nor the soil, however carefully studied, enabled the inhabitants to produce enough food to support the growth of the population. Happily the important streams of the Rhine, the Maas, and the Scheldt, at an early date, put the inhabitants of the Netherlands in touch with the arts and trade of Eastern and Southern Europe. Thus the



Levant, Venice, Nuremberg, Cologne, with many another busy and ancient centre of trade or learning, exchanged their products for those of Bruges, Ghent, Antwerp, Dordrecht, Delft, Leyden, or Haarlem, while further north, what was called the "Eastern trade" in corn, timber, furs, etc., with the people of the Baltic sea, from Bremen, Hamburg, Lubeck, and Dantzic, all passed through Holland, whose energetic citizens purchased their wools in England in the Middle Ages, and sent us their fruits, their fish, or their manufactures, in return.

One of the greatest of the Dutch industries (probably the greatest), the herring fishery, carried on by them off the Shetland Islands, was rapidly preparing a race of hardy seamen, and when the intolerable despotism of their Spanish rulers had goaded them into war, they found their true defence lay on the sea. Later on, when Antwerp fell into the hands of Spain, her merchants emigrated to Amsterdam, taking their wealth and their business with them. The same thing happened with the Portuguese Jews, who were expelled by the cruelties of the Inquisition from Portugal. They brought the trade of the Mediterranean to swell the commerce of Amsterdam,



which became the business centre of the world. As the eighty years' war for liberty progressed with Spain, the Dutch Navy and Merchant Marine grew in importance.

Before 1616, Sir Walter Raleigh, in his "Observations touching Trade and Commerce with Holland," dedicated to James I., had said, that while England sent only 100 ships annually to the Baltic, the Dutch sent 3000 there, and then with the Baltic commodities they filled 2000 other vessels yearly and sent them to France and Spain, Portugal and Italy. Raleigh had also said that they built nearly 1000 ships every year. If there was a pardonable exaggeration in these figures, we must still admit that the entire carrying trade of the world had passed into Dutch hands. A distinguished modern writer (A Lefevre Pontalis, "Vie de Jean de Witt," vol. i. p. 141) estimates the value of the merchandize thus placed in their hands at 1,000,000,000 frs. (say £40,000,000 circa).

Nor was this trade confined to Europe. In 1596 the Dutch landed in Java, and in 1602 their East India Co. was founded in Amsterdam,\* followed in 1607 by their West India Co., which

\* Dr. J. A. Wynne, "Algemeene Geschiedenis Derde Deel," p. 53.



established their trade with Brazil. They discovered and named such widely distant places as Vancouver's Island and Van Dieman's Land. They had preceded England in nearly every quarter of the globe, and they had shown us the way in nearly every art and industry, in religious toleration, in good government, and in law. They had, however, established insupportable monopolies in trade with the Spice Islands and other places, and had thereby thrown down a challenge we were not slow to pick up, but it must be admitted that our own East India Company was apparently based on the principle of excluding not only foreigners but Englishmen from profitable trade in the East.

The Dutch, freed from the Spanish yoke, had formed themselves into a Republic or combination of Republics, under a Stadholder or Viceroy, the name which had formerly been given to the ruler appointed by Spain to govern them.

The new State was called the United Provinces, and the assembly of their deputies, called the States General, was referred to as their High Mightinesses.\* The provinces were seven in number,

\* This body contained at first over 800 members, but afterwards it was agreed that some 30 to 40 deputies from



viz. Holland, Zealand, Gueldreland, Utrecht, Groningen, Overysse, and Friesland.

The continued successes of their navy against Spain, and the growth of their commerce, had gone hand in hand, till they now stood at the highest pinnacle of their power.

The "Beggars of the Sea," as they had been called, were now the lords of that element, and the very waves which daily threatened to overwhelm their country, had been converted by energy, business capacity, and courage, into their workshop and their home.

The Stadholder William had died in 1650, a few days before the birth of his son, and the aristocratic party at the time favoured a more republican form of government. The people, however, were anxious to have a member of the House of Orange ruling. In these circumstances, the supreme authority was vested in the Grand Pensionary of the State of Holland, the most powerful of the seven states, and the richest. The post was of the greatest importance, but the salary was of the least, being £200 a year.

the provinces should meet as the States General and sit continuously. The votes on a division only counted as one for each of the Seven Provinces.



The holder of the office, Johan de Witt, was in every way a distinguished man. Endowed with such mental powers as would have ensured for him the leading official posts in any country, Johan de Witt, as Grand Pensionary, was practically, at one and the same time, Home Secretary, Finance Minister, Secretary of the Navy, War Minister, and Foreign Secretary, during a period of some twenty-two years.

He had to contend with the antagonism of the greatest powers in Europe from without, and with the plots of the Orange party at home, and had to harmonize the interests of the various provinces, who, though they sent their delegates to form the States General at the Hague, were yet in themselves Sovereign States, and frequently exercised their very extended State rights. With a ceaseless grip of public affairs, de Witt was still able to combine such various projects as financial reforms, the elaboration of a system of State life annuities, and the invention and introduction of chain shot into naval warfare.

The trade of England was much smaller than that of Holland, and her shipping was still less able to bear comparison with the Dutch marine, so much the better from the brigand's point of



view, for she at least had nothing to lose. The English navy, consisting of about 80 to 90 warships, in readiness for war,\* as against the Dutch somewhat doubtful fleet of 150 sail of all sorts,† contained many more large vessels.

At the outset of a war Holland would have a marked advantage in her trained leaders, van Tromp, de With, and others, whose names were then best known to the people of either country, and in a larger number of hardened sailors.

England, on the other hand (like Germany to-day), possessed a triumphant army of acknowledged excellence—and with a larger population and more ancient national traditions, she had already acquired important colonies in the west, which only served to whet her growing colonial and commercial instincts, and had begun to turn her thoughts to expansion in the East. She, too, had defeated the Spaniards on the sea, and was not unnaturally jealous of the commercial supre-

\* See Appendix I.

† Burchett, see quoted below: "Charnock's History of Marine Architecture" (1801), vol. ii., says, "Dutch fleet 150, including all carrying more than 20 guns. English he says, except in the instance of the Royal Sovereign with two others, were equally diminutive and contained a number of very inferior vessels."



macy of the young Republic. Though England sought an alliance with Holland, she intended to be the predominant partner. In the end, neither the kinship of the two nations nor their common Protestantism prevented war.

In the early months of the present year (1896) we have seen that a strong navy has gone farther to prevent English interests being attacked by Germany, than any community of kinship or creed.

The English demands on the United Provinces were that they should pay the annual charge of £30,000 claimed in Charles I.'s time for the right to carry on the herring fishery in English waters—that they should acknowledge the sovereignty of England in the British seas, especially as regards rights of fishery, traffic, and anchorage, and should salute our ships by lowering the flag. The Government also earnestly pressed for an alliance between the two nations.

The first embassy was sent in 1649, but one of the two ambassadors, Doreslaus, was murdered by the English Royalists at the Hague, and the negotiations ended inauspiciously. A second embassy was sent in March, 1651, consisting of



St. John and W. Strickland, but though officially received with great ceremony, they were insulted by the Orange and Royalist faction, and had to be guarded in their hotel. Among the proposals on this occasion was one for the exile of Charles II. and his party from the United Provinces. In an evil moment for Holland, the Orange party, whose head (the infant William III.) was Charles the Second's nephew, prevailed, and the envoys of the Commonwealth returned to England infuriated by their bad treatment. There is no doubt that the Puritan Government, without a single ally on the Continent at that moment, had strenuously worked for an amicable alliance between the two countries. Their failure to achieve it facilitated the policy of Vane, who by the introduction of the Navigation Act, August 5th, 1651, was able to bring the navy into a foremost position in England, and thereby hoped to minimize for the moment the overweening influence of the army, now wholly under the control of Cromwell. The Act, which was passed in October, enjoined that foreign vessels should only bring into England products of their own country.

This was a staggering blow to the carrying



trade of the United Provinces, but it gave a very marked impetus to English shipping. The idea of action for the expansion of our shipping trade had not originated with Vane, but with Sir Walter Raleigh, who was always busying himself with England's maritime preponderance while he lay a close prisoner in the Tower of London, thirty-six years before this date.\*

Parliament issued letters authorizing English vessels to make reprisals on the Dutch. The envoys whom de Witt had sent to conciliate Cromwell found their task hopeless.† England was at last anxious for war, and Admiral Van Tromp, who was cruising in the Channel, with

\* Sir Walter Raleigh. In a volume of Tracts on Wool, 1669, British Museum, "Some collections of Sir Walter Rawleys, presented to King James, taken out of his Remains, discuss England's loss for want of due Informations of its Native Commodities." Among other recommendations (page 24) is, "Multiply your Navy, increase your Traffick."

† J. Burchett, "Complete History of the most Remarkable Transactions," etc. Edition 1720, Book III. p. 293. "Despatched an Extraordinary Envoy to England . . . fitted out fleet of 150 with a 'view to secure peace.' English some months before taken all Dutch ships they could meet with, the number of which, say the Dutch writers, amounted to near 200."



orders to act peacefully unless provoked, came into collision with Admiral Blake's force off Dover, May 18, 1652 (Brandt, p. 15).<sup>\*</sup> Each commander blamed his adversary for beginning the fight. Van Tromp had 42 ships, and English accounts give Blake 15, which were joined by eight under Bourne. The battle raged from four p.m. till after eight o'clock. The *James*, Blake's flag-ship, alone suffered severely. Six men were killed in her and 35 severely wounded. There were only nine further men killed in the English fleet, which took 250 prisoners. Two Dutch vessels were taken, but set adrift. The fight was drawn somewhat in our favour.<sup>†</sup>

The Dutch envoys now leave London in haste, and reveal a portion of the English plan of operations under which Sir George Ayscue, newly returned from attacking Barbadoes, is to threaten Dutch shipping in the Channel, with his 21 ships,

<sup>\*</sup> Lediard gives same date.

<sup>†</sup> "Columna Rostrata," Samuel Colliber, 1727, page 95, says, "The *James* had 80 guns and 500 to 600 men. She received 700 great shots. . . . The fight ended to the advantage of the English, who took two Dutch men of war without loss of any ship, Tromp drawing his shattered fleet back to the Goodwin Sands." The Dutch accounts relied on here are Brandt, Belinfante, Looman, and de Liefde.



and at the same time protect the small English commerce there. Blake meanwhile is to take 66 or 68 vessels to the Shetland Isles to destroy the Dutch herring fleet. This of course weakens the English force in the Downs, and leaves it at the mercy of van Tromp, who with 70 ships (Col. Rostrata) was cruising in search of Ayscue.

Van Tromp, missing Ayscue, and hearing that Blake, after capturing a large number of Dutch boats, had gone north—follows Blake. He arrives too late to save the valuable fleet of 100 large herring buizen, or “busses,” as we call them. Blake, after taking out a large number of fish, had generously sent the men home. A terrific storm breaks over the two fleets as they are preparing for fight, August 5, 1652. Blake, sheltered by the Scotch coast, was comparatively secure, but van Tromp’s fleet suffered so severely, that on his return to Holland, his command was taken away from him. This, however, was only an incident in the career of a “Zee-held” in the period when the hardy mothers of the little villages of Zealand and South Holland, sending their boys out to the sea fights, might well expect to welcome them as captains or even admirals, on their return; and again, in an equally short



space of time, see them condemned for some misadventure over which they probably had no control. The career of Marten Harpertszoon van Tromp is so typical, and so important, that it demands more than a passing notice. Born in 1597, at Brielle, in South Holland, the son of a sailor, he accompanied his father to sea at eight years of age. On his father's frigate, he took part in Heemskerk's glorious victory over the Spaniards at Gibraltar. Thus he joined the traditions of the earlier school of Dutch seamen and explorers, William Barentz, the discoverer of Spitzbergen, and Linschoten, the great explorer of the north, to the exploits of the contemporaries of de Ruyter. Shortly after the battle of Gibraltar, his father was killed by the fire from an English cruiser, when the boy van Tromp called out to his comrades, "Won't you avenge my father's death?" He was, however, taken prisoner by the English, and it was two years before he regained his freedom. Therefore it was with no love for this country that he had cruised along our coasts.

After rising to high rank in the navy (the famous Piet Heyn had been killed on his ship), he had retired dissatisfied, and was leading the



life of a good burgess at Brielle, where he also connected himself with the Church,\* when in 1637, Prince Henry obtained for him the post of lieut.-admiral, and he put to sea to distinguish himself by the annihilation of a great Spanish fleet under Oquendo, near Dunkirk, and the defeat of the united Spanish-Portuguese fleet off the coast of England. As his last promotion had proceeded from the House of Orange, he was looked upon as a supporter of that party.

De Ruyter had been sent as vice-commander, to protect his country from the English fleets, which now commanded the sea. With great difficulty his modesty had been overcome, and on the 10th of August, 1652, he hoists his flag on the little *Neptunus*, carrying only 28 guns and 134 men, and passing down the Channel gradually increases his fleet to 30 other vessels and six fireships. With these he convoys 60 merchant vessels outward bound through the Channel, where he is to remain to protect other ships returning from the west.

On the afternoon of August 26th,† de Ruyter,

\* "Leeven en Daden Der Doorluchtigste Zee-helden," etc. 1676. Tweede deel, p. 87, etc.

† Lediard says August 16th (O.S.).



when off Plymouth, sighted Sir George Ayscue, whose fleet is now increased to 40 vessels, of which 12 were, the Dutch say, of the largest size.\*

The wind is blowing from the N.E., and the English fleet being due north of de Ruyter, have an additional advantage in the weather gage.

De Ruyter immediately divides his ships into three squadrons of ten each, van den Broek leads the van, de Ruyter has the centre, and Verhaaf the rear. Behind each squadron is a squadron of 20 merchant vessels, which carries guns, and is of some service. To each of the squadrons in the fighting line are attached two fireships.

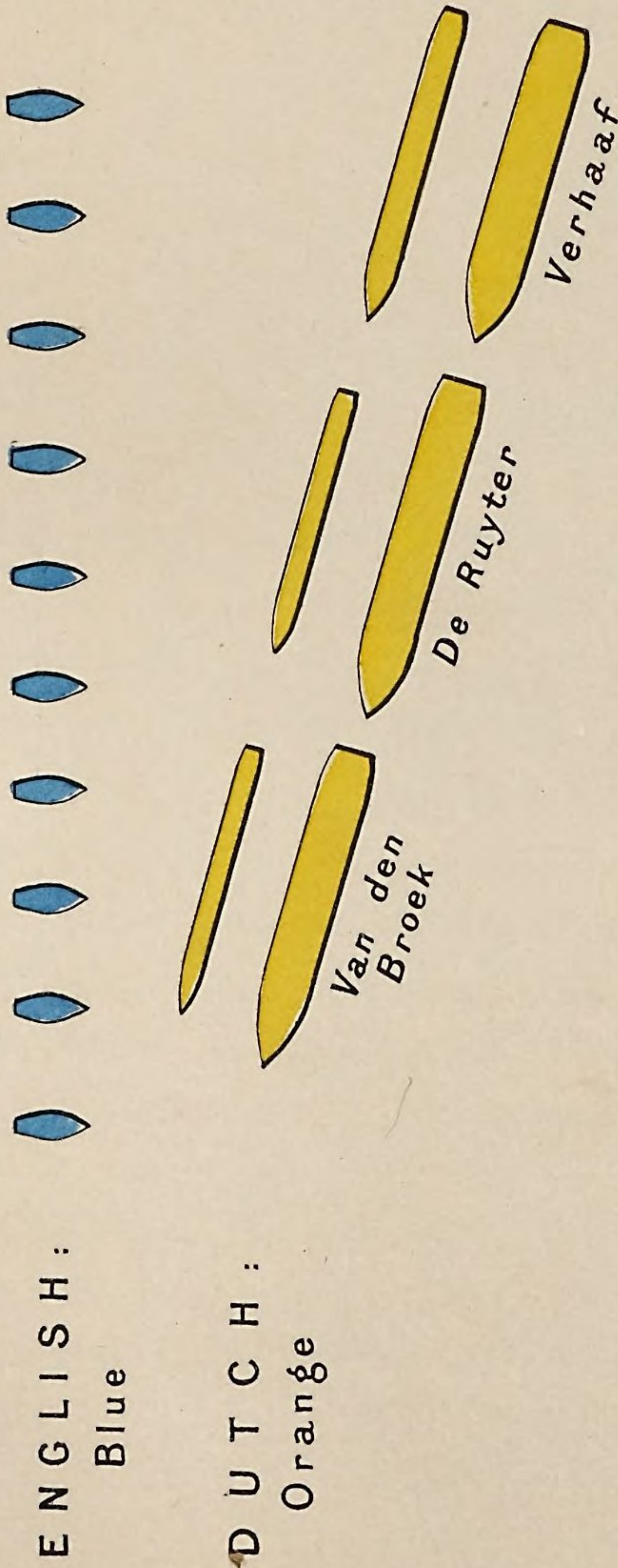
At four o'clock the fight begins, and lasts till eight, being marked by fierce tenacity on both sides; de Ruyter, who passes through the English lines twice, is for some time the centre of a furious cannonade. One of his captains, Dowe Aukes, of the *Vogel Struis*, is so punished by two English vessels, that his crew try to compel him

\* "Looman" (p. 24) says "De Ruyter had 20 very badly equipped men-of-war and six fireships, and Ayscue had among his 40 vessels, two ships of 60 guns, and eight of from 36 to 40." He states that de Ruyter's largest vessels, two converted merchantmen, "had 40 guns each, and the next in size had only 30."



PLYMOUTH  
AUG. 20<sup>TH</sup> 1652

Wind N.E. →



*Each of the blue Ships represents about 5 vessels.*

*The Dutch are shown in Squadrons.*







to surrender, when he seizes a flaming piece of wood and standing over the powder magazine swears that he would sooner blow up his ship, which so encourages his men that, returning to the guns, they sink two of our vessels and disable a third.

Night closed the contest, and Ayscue drew off his fleet. The English accounts claim that the battle was indecisive, but the Dutch accounts say they won—that 1300 men went down in the English ships, while the Dutch loss was 50 or 60 dead, including their vice-admiral, and 40 to 50 wounded, among these the rear-admiral. It is evident that Ayscue, who was a brave man, and had several times passed through the Dutch line, was so damaged in sails and masts as not to be able to follow the enemy.

The late famous Rector of Lincoln College, Oxford (Mark Pattison) is reported to have said that we “Englishmen lie as much as foreigners; but Englishmen have a dim consciousness that they are lying, while foreigners believe all the while that they are telling the truth” (“Recollections of Pattison,” by Tollemache, p. 52). In the stories of nearly every battle in these Dutch wars, there is always a little difference of opinion,



and it is often hard to say which side is wilfully deceiving.

De Ruyter humbly gave thanks to God for his success, and took no credit whatever to himself.

He now sent on his merchant ships, which were to pass the Straits of Gibraltar with two warships, and cruised in search of English merchants in the Channel. His ships were many of them badly damaged, and had to be sent home for repairs (Dutch "Life of van Tromp," quoted by "Col. Rostrata," p. 101).\* His flagship was among those. De Ruyter was afraid of meeting the combined fleets of Blake (now returned from the Shetlands) and Ayscue. Blake had indeed returned and taken 12 or 14 merchant ships which had come from Rochelle, etc.

De Ruyter escapes unseen, and between Grave-lines and Nieuwport, joins the main Dutch Fleet under Vice-Admiral Witte Corneliszoon de With, recently appointed to replace van Tromp.

\* "Col. Rostrata," pp. 100, 101, says Ayscue had 38 ships, two of between 50 and 60 guns, the rest light frigates and fireships; and de Ruyter had a like number of boats of 20 to 40 guns, and 20 merchant vessels which fought, besides 30 to 40 merchant ships which were not suitable for fighting.



The new commander was in a certain sense quite as representative of another type of Dutch seamen as van Tromp. He also was born in South Holland, and also, despite his ponderous names, was of very humble origin. He had served as vice-admiral under van Tromp, when, in 1639, the fleet had been fitted out and got to sea in less than five weeks, and he had distinguished himself in the subsequent brilliant victories in the Channel. He was a man of hot temper and rigorous discipline, and was not a favourite in the fleet where van Tromp was the idol of the Dutch sailor. A rough surly manner distinguished the mariners of Holland from the less aggressive boors. Their officers' manners were possibly not much better than their own, for they were generally of the same class as themselves. The dangers of the sea were so real that the official Dutch were disinclined to give the command of ships to their near relatives. An incident which occurred a few years later than the date we have now reached, shows something of the rough nature of these gallant seamen. The Comte de Guiche, escaping from the flames of one Dutch vessel, was rescued by another whose captain was a



brother-in-law of de Ruyter, the admiral in command. De Guiche, who had an invitation to go on board de Ruyter's flagship, was not allowed by the captain referred to, to leave his vessel until he had given the captain a note of hand for 200 livres!

The fiercest and roughest of the sailors were those from Zealand, their frequent encounters with the Dunkirk pirates and their own privateering reprisals had inured them to all hardships and accustomed them to any dangers. The privateer was quite common in the Netherlands navy. Of her prizes one-fifth went to the Admiralty, one-tenth to the admiral, and the rest to the merchants who had fitted her out. Among their other charities, the Dutch did not forget the old and destitute sailor, and Temple, who visited the home at Enkhuysen, pronounced it the most perfect establishment of the kind he had ever seen.

The united Dutch forces amounted to about 64 ships (Brandt, p. 22, Looman, etc.), and they put to sea in search of the English fleet in the Downs, but the weather being bad, the council of war recommended de With not to fight. He decided that he would fight, irrespective



of weather. He had put to sea not with the object of protecting or capturing any fleet of merchant vessels, as in the former battles, but simply and solely to meet and fight the best fleet England could send against him. "I will take the fleet joyfully to the English," he said, "but the Devil only can get her away again." \* Blake was waiting for him with a similar object, the greatest of all objects to a sailor—the *command of the sea*. The English fleet consisted of about 68 ships (that is four more than de With's) and the Dutch say they contained more fighting men. At three o'clock on the 8th of October, 1652,† Blake bore down on the wings of a storm which had been raging since the previous day, and assailed the Dutch fleet with such fury that it was at once thrown into confusion. No time was allowed for a fresh council of war, and failing to signal his orders, de With had to send a galiot from ship to ship with instructions. De Ruyter, commanding the van, bore the brunt of the attack. De With was in the centre, and

\* It was afterwards said that de With had saved the devil that trouble.—"Leeven en Daden Der Doorluchtigste Zee-Helden." Tweede deel, p. 100.

† Lediard says September 28th (O.S.).



de Wildt led the rear. A tremendous cannonade at close quarters, with the English ships now in their midst, mingled with the roaring of the wind, which served 20 captains of the Dutch fleet to carry their ships out of action. Unexampled in the previous history of their glorious navy, this disgrace only served to raise the courage of the men in the 44 ships now left to struggle with Blake's fleet. De With and de Ruyter, above all distinguished themselves. At the first onset de Ruyter lost a part of his large yardarm, the great topsail was soon full of holes, the mainsail broken, and nearly all the rigging in the same condition. Finally the large yardarm swung round to the port side, and with four shot below water-mark, and a large part of his men killed or wounded, he could hardly steer his vessel, and yet he managed to keep in the thickest of the fight. The next day there was a dead calm, but the English having received reinforcements (16 ships), de Ruyter's influence prevented his leader renewing the fight, and the Dutch continued their retreat to Helvoetsluys, pursued leisurely by the English. They lost at least two boats by this engagement, and probably four, though this is disputed, but



they had lost beyond all doubt, for the time being, the coveted command of the sea. De Ruyter would now have retired from the navy, but his friend de With became (owing to his deep grief at the result of the fight) too ill to command. De Ruyter returned to the fleet from Flushing. The influence of the 20 captains enabled them to escape the punishment they merited.

Van Tromp was now entrusted with the chief command in the navy, and de Ruyter was placed at the head of de With's squadron. The greatest exertions were made to fit a new fleet for the sea.

The winter season had set in, but van Tromp put to sea with 85 warships, or the English account says over 100, with frigates, etc., conveying a fleet of 300 outward bound vessels through the Channel, when on December the 10th, 1652,\* he sighted Blake, whose warships were only 37 in number, or as the Dutch say, 52, which included tenders, etc. Blake had sent a convoy of 20 ships to Newcastle, 12 to Plymouth, and 15 up the Thames; of the 37 which remained, it is said only 20 had their full complement of

\* Lediard says November 29th (O.S.).



men. The council of war decided to wait van Tromp's attack, and the fight which began at one in the afternoon raged without intermission till dark.

Blake, in a letter to the Government, quoted by Colliber, said that his flagship, the *Triumph*, with the *Victory* and *Vanguard*, were for a considerable time engaged with nearly 20 of the enemy. Ayscue rescued them, but the Dutch took the *Garland* and *Bonadventure* frigates, and two prizes of some value. Blake was beaten, and took his crippled fleet up the Thames next day. Ayscue, who was not in command, and therefore not responsible, laid down his commission. Had Blake not retired, his fleet would probably have been entirely destroyed. Van Tromp landed some troops on the Kentish coast, but was repulsed with a loss of 100 men. He was, however, for the moment supreme in the Channel. "But command of the sea," says a great naval authority (Admiral Colomb), "is not gained in a single battle, where strategical failure has been the cause of defeat." The Dutch took their merchant vessels through the Channel and as far as the Ile de Rhé. There van Tromp met a fleet of 250 Dutch merchantmen homeward



bound. These he escorted with his warships—English say 80, Dutch 70 or 76—up the Channel.

Meanwhile Blake and the Parliament had been busy offering rewards to all sailors joining the fleet in 40 days, and adding further inducements for future service. Blake's vigorous efforts produced a fleet of 66 war-vessels with which he awaited Tromp off Portland. On the morning of the 28th February, 1653 (or 18th February, 1652, old style),\* van Tromp was near Portland, with a favourable wind blowing from about W.N.W., when he sighted Blake's fleet lying to the east of him, and about five leagues from the coast. The English vessels were very much spread out, many of them being far to leeward. Van Tromp immediately decided to attack, and leaving his merchant vessels to windward of him, bore down with his full force on Blake, who was unable at once to bring up his scattered fleet against the wind, and for some time bore the attack of the Dutch with about 12 vessels only. Of these the *Speaker*, commanded by Penn, was the first to engage on her starboard, but quickly tacking gave the Dutch at closer quarters the fire of her port guns, at about ten o'clock.

\* Lediard says February 8th (O.S.).



Blake, in the *Triumph*, was soon hotly engaged. De Ruyter's ship being very severely punished by the *Prosperous*—a frigate of 40 guns and 170 men—he brought his ship nearer in order to board the English vessel. He had dreamt the night before that a bird alighted on his hand, but when he tried to catch it the bird had escaped him. As he drew nearer the English vessel, de Ruyter said, "See! there is the bird I dreamt of—we must catch him." The Dutch boarded the *Prosperous*, but so fiercely were they received, that the English succeeded in driving them back and entering de Ruyter's vessel. "Friends!" shouted de Ruyter, "what are you doing?—it's the other ship! Courage!—go back! Once in, always in." By these and other ejaculations, and his heroic example, he so aroused their fury, that they swept the crew of the *Prosperous* back on to her decks, and took that vessel—the only one the Dutch were to take that day; then, as the bird in the dream, it was lost again, for Blake now coming up, recaptured the *Prosperous* with the prize crew of Dutchmen on board. But so telling was the fire which van Tromp, and the other surrounding Dutch ships poured on the *Triumph*, that Blake was wounded severely in the thigh,



PORTLAND

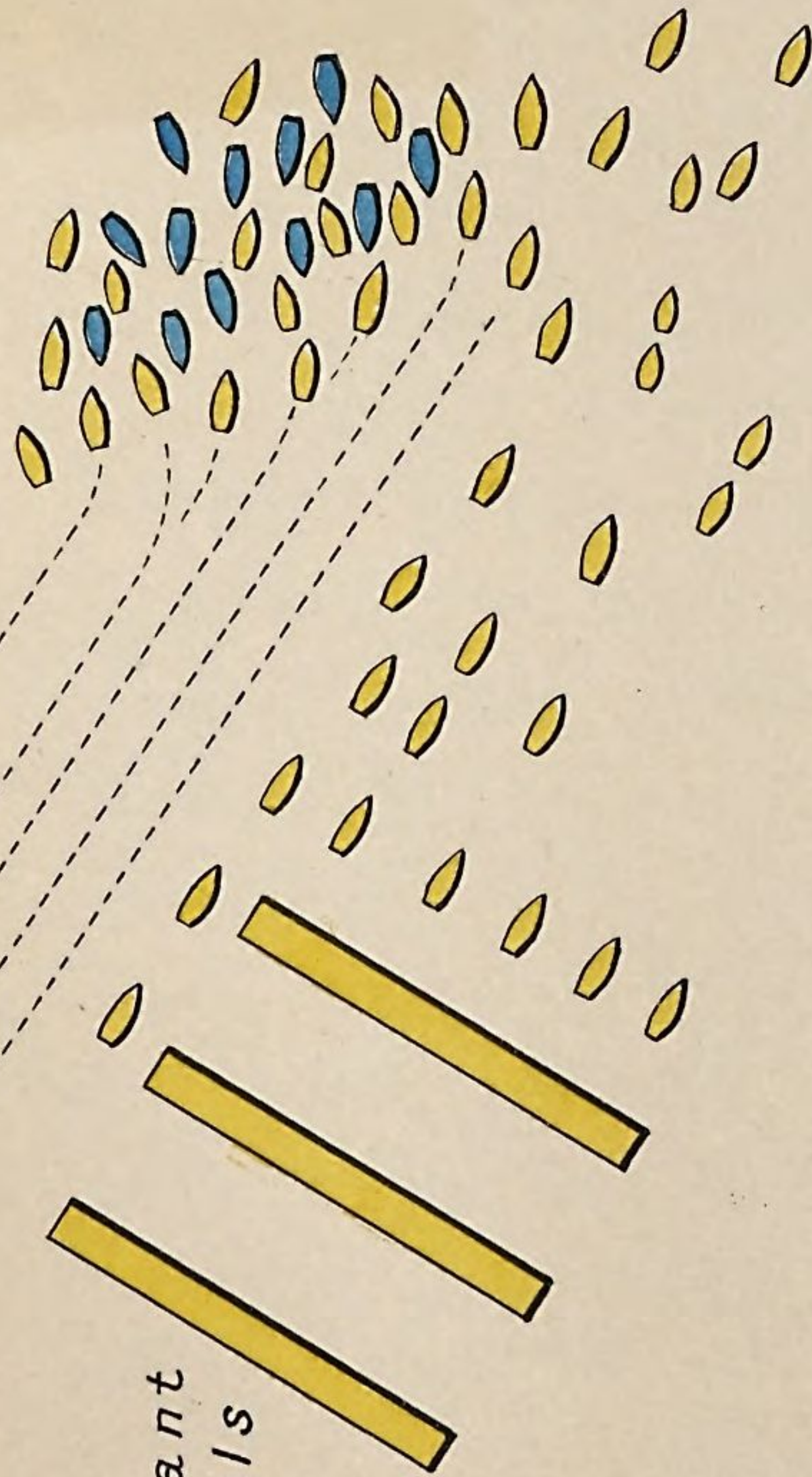
FEB. 28<sup>TH</sup> 1653

DUTCH: Orange

ENGLISH: Blue

Wind W.N.W. →

Merchant  
Vessels









and his ship rendered incapable of service either on that day or the next.

Fortunately for Blake, some 26 of the Dutch captains showed little of their accustomed courage under fire, but kept their ships at a distance. As the day wore on the English fleet was gradually reducing the odds against it, and late in the afternoon 16 ships, making up the total of 66, were brought up by the vice-admiral. Only darkness could stop the combatants. De Ruyter and van Tromp had done all that skill and heroic courage could do to ensure victory. De Ruyter had over 30 men killed, and a large number wounded on his boat, and he had also lost all the men that were in the *Prosperous* when Blake retook that vessel. His masts and rigging had suffered severely, his fore-topmast had been shot away, his sails were badly torn, and for a time quite useless. But for the assistance of Evertszoon, he would have been taken. Though so hard pressed, Blake had been able to send some frigates in the direction of the merchant vessels. He had taken or destroyed about seven Dutch men-of-war, and had only lost one ship, the *Sampson*, which he was obliged to sink. All night the rival warships rode side by side, but



without mingling, while the sailors worked hard with the repairs of masts and rigging.

Next morning they lay three leagues south of the Isle of Wight.

Van Tromp called a council. His attempt to smash the divided forces of the English having failed, he decided to retreat up the Channel, for which the wind was favourable, and his merchant vessels were sent in front, while van Tromp spread his warships in the famous half-moon formation between them and the enemy.

The English were apparently not able to rejoin the Dutch till after twelve in the day, but from two o'clock till night they had "warm work," and claimed to have taken some five Dutch men-of-war and over 14 merchantmen.

The fleets passed up Channel, the wind from the W.N.W. blowing "a fine little gale all night."

On that second day de Ruyter's ship was so hammered by the English fire, that van Tromp had it towed out of the line. At nine in the morning of the third day, about five of the English larger ships and the best frigates were close up with the Dutch, the others were not in touch. "The Dutch men-of-war being now scattered and much crippled," Blake sent his frigates boldly in



among them, and added to his captures of both warships and merchantmen. The wind was in his favour, and he hoped to get his big ships in front of van Tromp, who was now nearing the French coast. The Dutch fleet, being of lighter draught than Blake's, was, however, protected by the sands. Night, for the third and last time, divided the struggling navies before Blake could bring up the whole of his force, and when again morning gave the English hope of capturing the whole of the merchant fleet at least, no Dutch vessel was in sight. Van Tromp's marvellous skill had prevailed in the night, and they had escaped.

Apparently Blake had taken or destroyed over 11 warships, and about 40 to 50 merchantmen.\*

\* The account given here is principally based on the letter from Blake, Dean, and Monk to Parliament, from "Parliamentary History," vol. xxii. p. 116, quoted in "Penn's Life," by Granville Penn.

Père Hoste says, warships about 70 each side, merchant vessels 200, but indicates Blake reinforced by 16 warships after noon of first day. English note says this was only a part of Blake's fleet under vice-admiral.

Blake's letter above referred to claims 17 or 18 men-of-war taken or sunk, and 60 prizes; says prisoners stated Dutch fleet numbered 80.

"Columna Rostrata" (p. 109-115) gives 17 men-of-war taken; 14 merchantmen on second day, and "many more"



It is said that *all* de Ruyter's masts fell overboard the day after the third battle.

The object pursued by the English here was purely the destruction of commerce.

The States General, in publicly thanking de Ruyter for his part in saving the fleet, made him a present of 1500 gold guilders. He had fought without pay, and he was now awarded a monthly salary of 200 guilders, and was paid at this rate for the past year. The Council of the Admiralty, when the States General had decided upon the size of a fleet and the marine force to be employed, had the entire arrangement, including finances, left in their control. They were divided into four Colleges. Of these, three were in the province of Holland, at Amsterdam, Hoorn, and Rotterdam, the other two being at Middelburg on the third. T. Lediard, "Naval Chronicle" (p. 548) says Dutch ships were 76 or 73, and 300. They lost in three days: 1500 killed, 11 warships, and 30 merchants, which is the English claim. Gives date, 8th February.

Brandt (p. 31) says five Dutch ships sunk, four taken, and 24 merchants; and that there were 500 or 600 killed, including eight captains. He puts the English killed at about 2000, sailors and soldiers. Looman (p. 31) says van Tromp's fleet was 76 warships and Blake's 120. He admits the loss of nine warships, but says (p. 32) Dutch loss in killed 500 to 600, against English 2000.



in Zealand, and Harlingen in Friesland. Each of them had to furnish its quota, and appointed its captains and superior officers, and fixed the number of men per ship.

The captain recruited the crews, and provided the surgeons, medicines, and food, at a rate per head. This arrangement was considered to be a satisfactory one, because, if the men were short of food (or the ships were found to be uncleanly or unhealthy), the captain was liable to discharge on their report against him.

The English fleet was soon off the Dutch coast, then, chasing Evertszoon, it captured 50 herring busses, and again scoured the coast. Tromp, however, successfully convoyed a fleet of 200 ships, bound for France and Spain, to the north of Scotland. Meantime, far away in the Mediterranean, the gallant van Gaalen, fighting against our superior numbers, was lost to his country in the moment of victory.

Van Tromp at this time made vigorous complaints about the condition of the Dutch navy, and foretold the disaster which was soon to follow. The English Government, fortunately for this country, followed the advice of Blake in these matters, and never before had the sailor such opportunities or inducements to do his duty.



The Dutch did indeed stop the Greenland traffic and the whale fishery, and thus provided themselves with a valuable addition to the marine service, but they did not better the sailors' lot to the same extent.

On the 22nd of April, 1653 (Looman, p. 33, says March 29th), de Ruyter hoisted his flag on the *Gekroonde Liefde*, which mounted 36 cannons and 145 men. He was given the command of the fourth of five divisions of van Tromp's fleet, May 17th.

It was with greater reluctance than ever, that de Ruyter again went to sea. He wrote to the States General that only the worst ships had been prepared, and that they were very badly provided. Thirty new ships had been ordered in March, but they would not be ready for some time, and time was of the utmost importance.

Early in June, van Tromp's fleet was cruising off the island of Walcheren, in search of the English fleet, which had recently left the Vlie in the north of Holland. Tromp had just come from off Dover, where he had taken several small merchant vessels, and he now learnt that the English were returning to their own coast. On the 12th of June (June 2nd, O.S.), off the south



point of the Goyer, the two fleets came in contact at about eleven in the morning. That of van Tromp consisted of about 98 men-of-war and 6 fireships.\* The English fleet was composed of the Red Squadron, commanded by Deane and Monk, with 38 ships, 1442 guns, 6169 men; the White, under Penn, with 33 ships, 1189 guns, 5085 men; and the Blue, under Lawson, with 34 ships, 1189 guns, 5015 men.† The wind, coming from the north-east, was in favour of the English, who, after manœuvring for some time, opened the fight.

Almost immediately a ball carried off the head of Deane, scattering, it is said, his blood and brains over Monk, who stood near him. Monk, however, quite undismayed by the occurrence, ordered away the sailors who were nearest, and covering Deane's body with his cloak, continued to command the operations with perfect coolness.

Meanwhile Lawson, with the Blue Squadron,

\* "Columna Rostrata" (p. 124) says "98 men-of-war and 6 fireships; English 95 and 5 fireships." Looman (p. 34) says "98 Dutch, and English 95 to 100, but the latter larger and stronger." Brandt says the same. Lediard (p. 552) gives date June 3rd (O.S.).

† These figures include fireships, etc., and are not all men-of-war.



had charged through de Ruyter's division in the most determined manner. The fury of the attack, and the extreme danger in which de Ruyter stood for some time, is shown by the admission of Brandt that his ammunition was nearly spent, and van Tromp had to go to his relief. It appears from the same account, that the wind, which Lawson had lost, had now dropped, and Monk, coming to his succour, the two fleets were for some time fighting in a confused mass, covered and concealed by a dense fog of smoke. When the wind rose again, the Dutch account says they first took advantage of it, and then the English regained it. Still the perpetual ding-dong of the battle raged, scattering the summer sea with wrecks till nine o'clock, at which time a Dutch vessel was blown up, when the fleets sullenly drew about a league apart, and repairs and preparations for the morrow began on both sides.

The morning of the 13th opened with the wind blowing from W.S.W. The Dutch were sailing south-east, followed by the English, under small sails. Van Tromp called a council. He found his captains getting very short of ammunition. De Ruyter had about enough for



three hours. He decided to attack. They were now opposite Nieuwport, on the Belgian coast, and Van Tromp calculated upon being able to take refuge among the sandy shallows about Wielingen and Ostend, if his attack should prove unsuccessful. He has been called the Father of Naval tactics, and he put forth all his skill on this occasion to get the weather gage; according to the Dutch, he nearly succeeded, and had hoped to cut off a large part of the English, when he fell into a calm. Monk, who had been joined by Blake since the fighting stopped on the previous night, with some fresh ships, had opened fire at eight o'clock, and about eleven, got the desired wind. The English now came down upon van Tromp with great fury, and the impetus of their attack was rendered more effective by the want of experience and the imprudence of some of the Dutch captains, who allowed themselves to be separated from the main body of their fleet.

Van Tromp's vessel, the *Brederode*, was so badly shattered, that the water rose in the powder magazine in spite of all efforts to keep it out. She was only saved from capture by the timely aid of de Ruyter and Admiral de With. Defeat became certain, and every effort was made to



reach the shoals. The English followed closely as far as they dared, with their deeper vessels, and continued firing till an hour after sunset. They claimed to have destroyed eight ships and taken 11, and to have carried off 1350 prisoners.\* The Dutch admit losing seven or eight vessels. Van Tromp and his fleet were now safe, but Blake and Monk had won the command of the sea. Great was the discontent in Holland. The principal naval officers addressed a letter to the States General, complaining of the condition of the fleet, and stating among other things that the English had 50 ships, which were better than that of Lieut.-Admiral Van Tromp.

De Ruyter refused to go to sea again, unless a large number of vessels were added, which must be of a superior type to those then in use.

Vice-Admiral de With addressed to the Assembly of the States General, the celebrated protest which accurately describes for all time, the situation of things at that moment. "I am here before my sovereigns. It is my duty to tell them that the English are now masters of us, and therefore masters of the sea."

So greatly had things changed for the nation

\* Lediard (p. 552) says, "some say 1500."



devoted to commerce, and which, though animated with heroic courage, had sold its best warships when the Spanish war was ended, and was yet unfurnished with the means to protect the trade on which its very existence depended.\*

But the heart of Holland has never beaten with a fuller pulse than in the hour of danger, and though the English fleet ranged along the coast, and took 20 merchantmen off the Texel, while the Baltic and East Indian commercial fleets were detained, and Cromwell's government rejected the embassy sent them, the Dutch resolved to construct larger boats and heavier cannon. Placards were issued, offering large rewards for the capture of the enemy's ships, and with a curious scale of indemnities for injuries suffered by the defenders of their country. The loss of an eye entitled the sailor to about £20 in cash, the loss of both eyes to about £88, the same fee was a salve for the loss of two arms, but the loss of two legs only merited £45. The figures represent a considerably larger amount in the values of the present day. Dissensions there were of course, but preparations for continuing the war went briskly forward.

\* De Guiche (pp. 25 and 26) "had shown . . . that they only wanted those useful for merchandise."



In the north a fleet of 25 to 27 vessels had been prepared in the six weeks since the battle of Nieuwport, and placed under the command of Vice-Admiral de With, but the English blocked the Texel, and it could not get out.

Meantime, van Tromp had remained off the coast of Zealand and had refitted his ships. He had now 80 to 90.\* With these he started on the 6th of August with the object of raising the blockade of de With, if possible, without bringing on an action. By eight o'clock on the morning of the 8th,† he was opposite Egmond. Here he learnt that the English were eight leagues N.N.E. of him. He soon came in sight of them. The English had got a wind by eleven o'clock from W.N.W., and van Tromp retired to the S.S.W. in order to draw the English after him, but some of his fast sailers having been caught by the English frigates at four o'clock, a cannonade was carried on by both sides, which compelled van Tromp to await the enemy and to enter into a general engagement off Katwijk. De Ruyter and Evertszoon, who were very forcibly attacked, lost fore topmasts and had their sails cut to pieces.

\* Looman (p. 36) also gives 80 to 90 ships.

† Lediard gives dates 29th to 31st (O.S.).



Van Tromp coming to their rescue, the fight lasted till one hour after sunset, neither side getting any material advantage.\*

That night, Vice-Admiral de With slipped out from the Texel with 27 men-of-war and four fire-ships. All the beacons had been removed from the coast on the first arrival of the English, and de With was obliged to exercise great caution. Light vessels with pilots were sent in advance taking soundings as they went and with lanterns hung out to indicate the practicable channel.†

The 9th was a day of severe weather at sea, and serious fighting was out of the question. Van Tromp, however, kept the English fleet in play and drew them down the coast to the Hook of Holland, when he retired to the estuary of the Maas. At five in the afternoon, de With and van Tromp had succeeded in joining hands. Their forces now amounted, according to Dutch authorities, to 106 men-of-war.

Van Tromp, in command of this fleet, advanced upon the English, who retired northwards along the coast during the night, the wind blowing fresh about W.N.W.

\* Looman (p. 36) says with the ebbing tide both fleets moved further from the coast.

† They passed through the Spanjaartsgat. Looman, p. 37.



Next morning, Sunday, August 10th, 1653, at seven o'clock, almost opposite the village of Scheveningen, the battle began. It is alleged that near this place in December, 1651 (Aitzema, quoted by Brandt), the fishermen of the Maas had seen a visionary naval contest proceeding in the air. However that may have been, the present fight was easily seen by the excited spectators on the shore. Van Tromp led the right wing, de Ruyter the left, and Evertszoon the centre, whilst the rear was commanded by Vice-Admiral de With.\*

Monk, who was in chief command of the English fleet of 106 ships, with Penn and Lawson as his second and third, not wishing to be hampered with prizes or prisoners, gave orders to take no ships and give no quarter.

Van Tromp commenced the onslaught with his accustomed brilliancy, but when he wished to return, after charging through the enemy's line, he found himself cut off, and was struck by a musket ball just below the left breast, the wound proving almost immediately fatal. "I have done," he murmured; "have good courage." His captain signalled to the other commanders to hold

\* Looman says (p. 37) Floriszoon was joined to de With.



a council on the flagship. They decided to conceal the death and kept van Tromp's flag flying. Evertszoon now took command. De Ruyter, whose flag was flying in the *Lam*, greatly distinguished himself. His ship carried 150 men and 30 to 40 guns. Admiral Lawson, his antagonist on the 12th of June, again attacked him, and so severe was their encounter that de Ruyter soon lost 43 men killed and 35 wounded.

His foremast and main topmast were shot away, and finally his vessel had to be towed into the Maas. De Ruyter himself returned to the fight, which continued with unabated fierceness. The Dutch felt they were fighting for the existence of their beloved fatherland, and were incited to deeds of reckless heroism by the crowds that watched them from the shores, or the rising dunes. The English were animated by the contemptuous valour of Monk, whose ship appeared wherever danger was imminent, and who could boast of having that day shot down the flags of van Tromp, Evertszoon, and de Ruyter. Between two and three o'clock it was apparent that after passing through the English four times, a number of the Dutch captains had withdrawn their ships from the main battle. De With attempted, by



attacking the enemy with the rear-guard and endeavouring to gain the weather, to bring back the retreating ships. But though he urgently signalled them they would not return, and after making a good fight, the line giving way in all directions, he was obliged, late in the day, to retire to the N.E., followed by the English, who had got the wind. About midnight, however, his pursuers had left de With, and he continued his course to the Texel. The rest of the Dutch escaped among the shoals at the mouth of the Maas. The English claimed that the Dutch lost over 20 ships and from 5000 to 6000 men. They took 1200 prisoners, in spite of Monk's instructions, and admitted losing two ships, burnt, and 400 of their men killed and 700 wounded.\*

Vice-Admiral de With, in his letters to the States, admitted that 12 to 14 ships were missing.

The Dutch claim they were not defeated, as the English fleet went back to England in the night for repairs.

The English, however, exercised a control of

\* Looman (p. 38) says, the Dutch lost 500 dead, 700 wounded, and 10 ships, and that the English lost eight ships and more than 1200 men.



the sea, and it was only by accident that Vice-Admiral de With was able to pass them when convoying an outward bound fleet through the Channel, and in returning with another shortly after. The English fleet was off the Vlie and there took 30 merchantmen, capturing also near the Scotch coast, four frigates and many herring busses.

Holland now made proposals for peace. Cromwell, whose hands were full, was willing to give up the English claims—for an annual rent of the herring fishery, for the right of search at sea, for limiting the number of Dutch men-of-war, and for Free Trade in the Schelde.

The Dutch agreed to deliver the murderers of the English at Amboyna, if found; to strike the flag to English ships, thus owning to our dominion of the seas; to accept the Navigation Act, to exclude the House of Orange from the office of Stadholder, to pay a sum for reparation and damages, and to return the ships seized by the King of Denmark. The Treaty was signed April 5th, 1654, old style, or April 15th, new style, at Westminster. The Dutch had suffered terribly in the war, 1700 prizes, valued at £6,000,000, were said to have been taken by the English,



while the Dutch only captured a quarter of that number.\*

It is said that Holland suffered more from this war of 23 months, which was exclusively a naval war, than she did from her 80 years' war with Spain on land and sea.

The often-quoted words of her own historian Aitzema, are the most completely descriptive of her condition :—

“The sources of revenue which had always maintained the riches of the state, such as fisheries and commerce, were almost dry. Workshops were closed, work was suspended. The Zuyder Zee became a forest of masts. The country was full of beggars; grass grew in the streets, and in Amsterdam 1500 houses were untenanted.”

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\* Looman (p. 38) says the Dutch loss in merchant ships in this war was 1600, that the whale fishery was forbidden by the State, and the herring fishery forcibly stopped by the enemy, also that 3000 houses in Amsterdam were empty.



## A NECESSARY LEADER.

CALLED TO COMMAND—DUTCH HOME INTERESTS—THE MEDITERRANEAN — THE BALTIC — WEST AFRICA — WEST INDIES —  
WASSENAAR'S DEFEAT.

DE RUYTER, who was now forty-seven years old, had retired to Flushing, hoping to live quietly with his family ; but, as usual, the Government could not do without his help in the navy, and they had already offered him the post of Vice-Admiral of Holland, under the Admiralty of Amsterdam. Their proposal was declined, but on their again intreating his acceptance, he came to the Hague, where the Grand Pensionary de Witt eventually succeeded in persuading him that it was his duty to take the proffered command. He accordingly decided to remove his family to Amsterdam, which hereafter became their home. On the 17th of June, 1654, he hoisted his flag on the *Huis te Swieten*, and with five men-of-war set sail for the Mediterranean, having in his charge a fleet



of merchantmen. He returned to Amsterdam in November of the same year. In the following spring he was made a burgess of Amsterdam. This was considered a great honour, though the burgesses of Amsterdam had, about 100 years earlier, given up their right of electing the Senate of 30 burgesses, by whom the municipal government was conducted. The senators now filled up themselves from the burgesses, any vacancy in their number. They sat for life, and nominated eighteen échevins, out of whom nine were chosen and appointed by the burgesses as the Court of Magistrates of Amsterdam.

The appointment of the four burgomasters of the town was entirely in the hands of the Senate. With the burgomasters lay the disposition of a number of offices of the highest importance, as well as the arrangement of finances and the keeping of the key of the Bank of Amsterdam, which was said to contain the greatest treasure in Europe.

The activities of the Dutch were by no means confined to war and commerce. The claims of science and art had not been at any time entirely neglected by them, and about the period we have now reached there were several groups of



ardent workers of such eminence that succeeding generations must always stand indebted to them. A numerous band of scholars flocked to and from the learned teachers at Leyden and elsewhere, and the names of Heinsius, Vossius, Huygens, Grotius, Spinoza, and others, were known very widely on the Continent and in England.

The greatest of the grammarians, in the judgment of contemporaries was, however, a little Frenchman, Claude de Saumaise, better known by the ponderous name of Salmasius, whose erudite criticism, sought for by princes, was attracted to Holland's great university by Dutch opulence, to the envy of other less-favoured seats of learning. His reputation had reached its zenith, when Milton took up the gauntlet in defence of England, and dazzled all Europe by the brilliant latinity with which he castigated the grammarian at the cost of his own eyesight.

In the year 1606, some eight months earlier than de Ruyter's birth, the human pilgrimage of Rembrandt had begun in the miller's house on the walls at Leyden. He was now the recognized lord of light and shade. In 1642, his "Banning Cock Club," better known as the "Night Watch,"



appeared, and work after work, endowed with the warm humanity of his overwhelming genius, had come forth from his studio.

At Amsterdam, Harlem, or Leyden, the great masters of the Dutch school were only less conspicuous, Frans Hals bringing in the gay note of his groups from his favourite guilds, Ruysdael and Hobbema tinging their art with the sadness of a nation which had passed through 80 years of bitter warfare, while Brouwer and his pupil, Adriaan van Ostade, painting out among the boors on the greenswards interlaced by canals, or in tumbledown peasant homes, gave a happier view of the existence of the very poor, the existence of de Ruyter's grandparents and relatives.

From abounding shadows Rembrandt brought forth the unfailing ray of light in his pictures, a striking contrast to the work of our Turner, glowing with joyous light, and rendered brighter by his favourite central patch of dark foliage. Although art was appreciated and encouraged, a number of these great painters died in abject misery. Like bright flowers which have grown from seeds sheltered beneath the snowdrift, they flourished for a time, but the storm and stress of the age were too severe for the artistic temperament.



The Reformation had almost reformed religious architecture off the face of the country. The exultant harmonies of the traceries of Antwerp showed the heights to which the Netherlands might attain, but the stern religionists of the sixteenth century seemed to think that their tabernacles of purple brick without, and whitewash within, answered all purposes of art and religion. Still Utrecht, and Harlem, and the majestic tower of Dort, remain as the indications of a higher watermark in religious architecture than was to be reached again. Each town had its own social coterie. The independence and individuality of the great towns of the Netherlands, which had often degenerated into selfishness and insularity, formed from an early date an obstacle to complete unison, even in a country of so small an area. One of the favourite sources of revenue of a Dutch Government was taxation of passenger traffic between the towns by boat, by coach, or by horse. None the less could Neeltje bring in the milk from her cows, or Jan the produce of his farm by the excellent roads and waterways. The pleasures of social intercourse were tempered by Dutch solidity of judgment, and the visitors from the courts of Versailles and London, astonished



at the virtue of the women in this land of orderly living, could only explain it by the remark that it was handed down from mother to daughter, and observed as a sort of religion. As the Dutchman loved liberty for himself, so his wife was probably more independent than any woman in Europe. The entire management of the house and family was in her hands.

Sir William Temple, in his "Observations upon the United Provinces," which include the year 1672, divides the Dutch into five classes, viz. the noblemen who mixed most with foreigners (and, therefore, differed somewhat in their tastes from other Dutchmen), but took little active part in State affairs; the rentiers, living either on patrimonial estates or on their investments in the funds, who furnished the principal officers of State, magistrates, etc.; the traders or merchants, who only occasionally undertook these duties, or intermarried with the preceding class; the mariners, of whom we have already spoken, and the boors, who he says were very restricted in their means, and lived on roots,\* herbs, and milk.

\* Probably Temple is thus describing some of the Dutch vegetables, which they still produce in greater abundance than the growers on this side of the Channel.



Simplicity in dress and in meals, was common to all five classes, and the universal custom of living within their incomes made them willing taxpayers, promoted the welfare of the country, and contributed to the beauty of the public works, which were many and far famed.

The enjoyments of the different classes were not dissimilar, bowls and a kind of backgammon being general favourites among games.\* Wild duck, and wild goose shooting, which was popular with students, seems to have brought them sometimes disagreeably in contact with the peasants who bred geese, but a love of angling was, again, common to all, and fishing-parties were a popular portion of the social round. If horse sleighing and skating, in which latter sport a contemporary says the ladies threw themselves into "thousands of agreeable postures," † were fashionable for the rich, the boors also had their handsleds, in which they pushed their children—and how beautiful were those sleds the antiquity shops of the Hague bear witness to this day.

On wooden skates, shaped like a weaver's shuttle, the boors might be seen scudding along in large

\* J. de Parival, "Les délices de la Hollande," p. 221.

† *Idem*, p. 473.



parties on the Sundays. Lacrosse was one of their games played on the ice with a small hard ball which was aimed at a target. It is, however, in the dancing parties of boor and gentleman that, in the seventeenth century, some of the most curious social features are to be found. A few days after a boor's marriage, a feast might be given, at which the guests would each contribute a present in eatables. These the donors would themselves serve or carve. The *menu* would include rice-pudding, stock fish, potatoes, and ham, with beer in plenty. At evening, if the house were small, the dance would take place in a neighbouring house. In this case the bride would be led to it by a violin player, and she would open the dance with the master of the house, who must receive from her a hat or a white handkerchief, as a return gift. The drinking of gin, and the hilarity, increased during the evening, till the host or husband, considered that enough had been consumed, when he "knocked off," to translate the Dutch expression, and those guests who required more drink obtained it for payment from purveyors who now appeared on the scene.\*

\* Dr. Schotel, "Oude zeden en Gebruiken" (from an anonymous manuscript).



Among the upper classes, the puritanical spirit of the age had inculcated a suspicion of the dangers of dancing, and a "Travelling Journal through Rome to England," by W. de Mey, a young man of quality, 1679 to 1680,\* argues the point from the other side, and says, that "such dancing as the 'courant' is really more like walking in order and with proportion," but adds, that serious people reasonably object to the "frivolous jumps of the minuet or the sarabande, which is a thing of bad consequences that should not be tolerated in a republic which administers justice." The journal continues that the more liberal would allow dancing between members of the same sex, but the dancing (of the minuet and sarabande) "by men and women together, gives occasion to immodest thoughts, and that is frivolity." The dancing of modest figures, by men with young ladies, the writer highly approves, as removing the bashful "ticklishness of feeling produced by gazing at one another and gallant conversation, for this," he continues, "dancing prevents by the necessity of thinking of steps and posture."

To turn from the dancing to the more serious

\* Quoted in *idem*.



side of life, that of the clergy, with whom de Ruyter was connected by the marriages of two of his daughters, we find that their way of living was of the simplest and most severe.

A brochure, published by a Dutch clergyman about the middle of the seventeenth century, gives the necessary expenses of a clergyman and wife without children. It shows that the two could really not live at 500 guilders—*i.e.* £41 — per annum. In their list of expenses is to be found nothing for enjoyments, all the items are for the absolute necessities of life. The meat, of all kinds, for a year, would cost them at least 50 guilders, say a little over £4, at 1s. 8d. per guilder; the fish, fresh and salt together, 20 guilders; bread, 36; butter, with the tax on it, 48; while their maximum of 200 eggs would be 4 guilders. The clergyman remarks that his wife must give a good example in charities, therefore he puts 10 guilders down to that account. His 40 florin cloak lasts him two years, and he charges it accordingly; but his wife's mantle with a hood, costing the same amount, will last her ten years, and he therefore only debits her with four guilders for the year.

The total expenses of these hard striving people for the year, after all details have been filled in,



amounts to 547 florins, or £45. De Ruyter's two clerical sons-in-law were Bernardus Somer of Amsterdam, who married his daughter Margareta; and Thomas Potts of Flushing, whose wife was Alida, daughter of de Ruyter's second marriage. The Potts accordingly obtained about a third of his property after de Ruyter's surviving wife had taken out her half of the estate, but Mevrouw Somer, being the offspring of de Ruyter's third marriage, would only get at that time a nominal amount, as she would, on the death of her mother, receive all her mother's moiety. There was another interesting arrangement in her case. The will shows that Mevrouw Somer alone in the family had jewels given her on her marriage (they were valued at £100), and this had to be deducted in dividing the admiral's estate. Evidently both the clergymen fared better than the writer of the brochure above quoted, when they obtained the hands of the admiral's daughters.

At Dordrecht, most venerable of Dutch cities, where a polished and aristocratic society maintained its culture by learned discussion, the Grand Pensionary's father, the elder de Witt, might be seen in old age a confirmed misanthrope, ever recalling his imprisonment in Loewenstein by



William II., avoiding his friends, and, by way of saying good morning to his son, reminding him of the "prison of Loewenstein." Among the towns of South Holland, Dort and Delft were ever the firmest in support of the de Witts.

There were glorious associations connected with the House of Orange; but there were also some bitter memories bound up with the last two generations. Its devoted supporters were divided to some extent, even in the family of the prince himself, whose German grandmother, the dowager princess, was in disagreement with his English mother Mary Stuart.

The province of Zealand, which ranked in importance after the province of Holland, had always been very much under the influence of the members of the Orange family, who were among other things Lords of Flushing and Terveere, and consequently controlled the deputies from those places. They had, indeed, been instrumental in giving the great towns of Holland and Zealand their paramount control in those provinces, and had correspondingly diminished the power of the nobles there. In Friesland and Groningen the Prince of Orange was also gaining ground.

It was this condition of home politics, tending



as it did to make the Dutch of the seventeenth century sensitive to the least move on the part of their leaders, which they did not comprehend, that drove their otherwise phlegmatic temperament into excitement, which, in the space of ten years, showed itself in some four unwarranted personal attacks on their leaders, resulting in the death of two of them. Thus society was divided into two camps, the supporters of de Witt being the more aristocratic, but the Orange faction, which embraced more of the people, was gradually making inroads into the more polite domain of its opponents. The great policy of de Witt was, of course, decried by the friends of the Prince of Orange at every turn. At one moment it was said to be de Witt's vanity which governed his action, at another his hatred of the House of Orange, to which they disingenuously alleged he would gladly have sacrificed the country. The opportunities of sowing dissension among the seven provinces were cleverly manipulated by Charles II. and Louis XIV., and did not fail to add to the difficulties of government.

On the 18th of June, 1655, de Ruyter again sailed for the Mediterranean in the *Huis van Tydverdryf*, with nine other warships, escorting a



fleet of 50 merchant vessels. He had very distinct orders as to dealing with the Barbary and other pirates then infesting the Mediterranean. Meeting Admiral Blake, these two greatest commanders of their respective nations at that day, saluted one another very cordially, and expressed their mutual respect in a practical way, de Ruyter sending the English admiral a tun of beer and some rum or hock, and receiving, as his historian says, some fine jams in return.

De Ruyter, passing along the Spanish coast, negotiates about a Dutch vessel which had been lately taken, then through the Straits of Gibraltar he chases the Admiral of Algiers, and after a fierce encounter takes his vessel, and some others. Arrived at the town of Salee, he makes arrangements for a treaty with the chief, and again starts in pursuit of the corsairs.

He also negotiated with his friends at Salee for the purchase of Arab books and maps, so varied were his orders from the States General. In May, 1656,\* he was back again in Amsterdam, and by the end of that month he was starting for the Baltic, with Floriszoon and the younger van Tromp, commanding 25 vessels, with orders

\* Looman (p. 53) May 2nd, 1656.



to keep open the passage of the Sound during the continuance of the war between Sweden and Poland. Lieut.-Admiral Opdam afterwards went to command the fleet, which was much enlarged. Then in the autumn they were all recalled, and de Ruyter returned to the Mediterranean station,\* where French privateers were doing great damage to Dutch trade, although the French were supposed to be on the best of terms with Holland. On one occasion, when chasing two of these vessels, he hoisted English colours, wetted the sails to increase speed, and having got near them, he ordered their captains on board, when to his surprise he recognized in one of the prisoners, Captain la Lande, the pirate who had taken him prisoner and released him some years before. De Ruyter accordingly treated this man extremely well, but had to hand him over to the Dutch authorities to deal with.† His two ships, however, belonged to the King of France, and though de Ruyter had taken them when engaged in piracy, the Dutch had to make amends to France, for the king had *lent* his vessels to be

\* Looman (p. 56) December 24th, 1656.

† La Lande's sword was shown in the de Ruyter exhibition at Flushing, 1894.



used as *privateers*, on the condition that a third of the proceeds of the robberies should go to a certain great man, but he did not intend to lose them. De Ruyter had, however, sold one of the privateers at Cadiz in the mean time.

From Cadiz he went on to Salee in the spring of 1657, completed his treaty with the Moors, and patrolling the Italian coast, gave chase to a flotilla of French privateers, of whom he took one and drove the others into the harbour of Spezzia, where he blockaded them till news was received of the settlement of the questions in dispute with France. He then went through the Straits to Cadiz. It was at that time an axiom in Dutch policy that the Straits of Gibraltar should be kept clear. All the enormous trade of Holland with the Mediterranean depended upon her ability to maintain this state of things, so necessary at the present day to England.

At Cadiz de Ruyter bought back from the Spaniards for the original purchase money, la Lande's vessel, the *Reine*, that the Dutch might return it to France. When passing through the Straits again eastward, he received orders to cruise off the coast of Portugal, with which country war was declared later in the year, on



account of Portuguese depredations in the Dutch possessions in the Brazils.

Lieut.-Admiral Opdam, now known as Lord of Wassenaar, took the chief command, and the united fleets blockaded the mouth of the Tagus. Having captured 15 ships of the Portuguese sugar fleet, Wassenaar deemed it wise to take them to Holland without delay.

Though subjected to very stormy weather, the fleet and prizes arrived at the Texel December 6th, 1657.\* Early in 1658 de Ruyter was sent with 22 ships to lie off the coast of Portugal, but owing to the violence of the weather, did not arrive there till the end of June. The Portuguese would not risk an engagement, and the blockade continued, to the great damage of their trade, which was now at a standstill, and the loss of many vessels to their shipping industry.

De Ruyter sent some of his ships into the Mediterranean, and was able to use Cadiz for the refitting of such as required repairs.

The life of the seaman was then much harder than even at the end of last century, and the illness and mortality were much greater. Though

\* Including a storeship with over 624 chests of sugar and 1000 skins (Looman, p. 66).



the Dutch have always borne the highest reputation for cleanliness, yet their ships were often very foul at this period, and much illness prevailed amongst the crews, even after being at sea only two or three months. So changed were the conditions when Nelson was able to keep his sailors free from illness, after more than twelve months of sea life. De Ruyter took the keenest personal interest in the condition of his men, and though a strict disciplinarian, the warmth of his sympathy is alway conspicuous. Like our Admiral Blake, and indeed many of the great men of that period, his character had a deep religious basis. Every Sunday on deck he read the Bible to the sailors. It is said to have been his favourite, probably (as with the Puritan of the early seventeenth century), it was practically his only book. He delighted to join in singing the psalms, not only because he deemed it beneficial to himself and others, but because he liked to exercise his excellent voice. In accordance with his instructions, he took his fleet home in the autumn of 1658.

In the mean time Holland's close ally, the King of Denmark, had become embroiled with Sweden, and had succeeded in drawing the Dutch into



the contest.\* It was necessary to Holland, that the *status quo* in the Baltic should not be materially changed, and Wassenaar consequently took some 2,000 troops † with the fleet to the Sound. He entered the Sound, under fire of the Swedish batteries and fleet, on the 8th of November, 1658, after a severe fight, in which the Dutch manifested their superiority on their own element. The news of this victory was received with great satisfaction in Holland, but it was recognized that an army would be more useful than a fleet. The States General therefore decided to recall Wassenaar with 11 of his largest ships, and to send de Ruyter into the Baltic with four vessels as an escort to Colonel Killegrew and 4000 troops, whom they had ready to despatch. These arrangements were all delayed by the news that the new Protector, Richard Cromwell, was sending an English fleet to the Sound, and it was soon after decreed that the Greenland shipping trade and the whale fishery should be stopped in order to provide a sufficiency of sailors. The majority of the merchants

\* Dr. Wynne, "Algemeene Geschiedenis Derde Deel," chap. xxv. p. 97.

† Brandt. Looman (p. 69) says 40 ships.



interested in these industries thereupon offered to provide 1200 hardened sailors at 15 livres (guilders) a month, if the stop on their business were removed. This was accepted, and on the 20th of May, 1659, de Ruyter sailed from the Texel with 45 ships, with orders to place himself under the flag of Lieut.-Admiral Wassenaar. Very precise instructions were given to avoid a contest with the English fleet, except in the case of the latter endeavouring to block their progress. Colonel Killegrew was to be landed at Copenhagen, and was to follow the instructions of the King of Denmark. On the 18th of July the entire Dutch command, after a friendly meeting with the English fleet, had reached Copenhagen.

At this time the ambassadors of England, France, Holland, Denmark, and Sweden were busily engaged in negotiations (intended to preserve peace), which dragged on for many months.

The English fleet sailed on the 5th of September, its commander Sandwich being engaged with Monk in conspiring for the return of the Stuarts.

The provisioning of such a large number of Dutch vessels was becoming a difficulty. There was a great scarcity of all necessaries in Denmark, and the health of the crews was suffering; Wasse-



naar himself was more or less ill, and consequently left for Holland, with 20 vessels, early in November.\* De Ruyter remained commanding-in-chief the important fleet which was left. Negotiations for peace had failed. The provisioning of the fleet, the convoying of merchant vessels to and from Dantzic, and the embarkation of a body of Danish troops at Kiel gave him constant occupation. Early in the previous year the King of Sweden, Charles Gustavus, had crossed the narrows north of the Little Belt on the ice, with some 6000 troops, and had captured the island of Funen. It was now decided, with de Ruyter's assistance, to endeavour to retake it. On the 8th of November he appeared off Nyborg, with about 100 ships, having on board 5200 cavalry and 4600 foot; but the enemy were found fully prepared, and kept up such a heavy fire, that it was found impossible to land. Next day de Ruyter proposed to the Danish generals to make a feint of landing at night, and to set sail in the early morning for Kiertemunde, which lies as the crow

\* Looman, p. 74. He gave the command to de Ruyter October 19th, 1659. De Ruyter, through the influence, unsought for on his part, of the States of Holland, had been promoted over Vice-Admiral Johan Evertszoon, his senior.



flies some 10 or 12 miles north of Nyborg, on the east coast of Funen. The empty long boats were sent towards the shore in the night, with much show of preparation, and a cannonade was kept up, the Swedes replying briskly, but at four o'clock in the morning the whole fleet sailed for Kierte-munde. A change of wind forced the ships out of their course, but by midday they were before the town. They anchored immediately, and poured a sustained fire upon the houses there, and on the cavalry in and out of the place. The Danish admiral and vice-admiral went on board de Ruyter, who then accompanied them to the Danish flagship, and himself persuaded the Danish military commander, Marshal Schack, to land the troops, as it was already late, two o'clock, and time was of the greatest importance. The long boats were manned, and de Ruyter himself was rowed near the shore where, standing upright in his boat under a heavy fire, he called to the soldiers, "Forward, friends, forward, or you are all dead men!" The men, in water up to their waists, struggled to the firm ground, where the Swedish infantry, protected by entrenchments and flanked by cavalry, were firing repeated volleys into their ranks; but, covered by the fire



from the ship, the assailants were in the end victorious, and carried the town, the Swedes retiring to Nyborg. Two sailors had been killed in the boat which held de Ruyter, but he remained there until the assault was successful. On the next two days the cavalry were landed, and provisions for a week were given out; but, although de Ruyter urged the necessity of immediate action, it was only on the 17th that the march to Nyborg began. It proceeded very slowly, because of the very narrow defiles through which the troops had to pass, and also owing to a heavy fall of snow.\* The Danes meanwhile received some reinforcements from the mainland of Denmark. They found the Swedes, on the 23rd of November,† about 7000 in number, and posted about a league from Nyborg on the slope of a hill, with a hollow or ditch and thick hedge in front, which were utilized by musketeers as cover. The Prince of Sultsbach and Marshal Steinbok were in command. The Danes and allies were under Marshals Eberstein and Schack, and Major-General Tramp. They amounted, as already stated, to about 5200 cavalry and 4600 foot.

\* Looman, p. 76.

† November 24th (Looman, p. 76).



The Dutch contingent was in the centre, only a few companies of them being mixed with the left wing. The Danish cavalry and the right wing began the fight, and pushed gallantly on as far as the line of hedges, but there met with a resistance that caused them to fall back in such disorder, that the Swedes, who at the same time repelled the left wing, were able to seize some of the Danish cannon. The Dutch of the centre received the order to charge at this moment; and in closed battalions, with pikes lowered, they swept through the ranks of the Swedes—probably somewhat scattered in their pursuit of the Danes and Germans—and speedily recaptured the cannons. It was afterwards admitted that the line was unbroken wherever it was formed by the Dutch troops. The allies, when once rallied, surrounded and almost cut to pieces the Swedish infantry. The cavalry retreated into Nyborg, but the Prince of Sultsbach and Marshal Steinbok escaped through a wood which extended to the shore, and there bribed a fisherman to take them over to Zealand. De Ruyter, who was out in the Great Belt directing the movements of Dutch fleets, was summoned after the victory, and on the 25th of November posted some of his vessels on the coast



about north-north-east of the town, with instructions to fire on the Swedes there. With the remainder of the fleet he attacked, and soon silenced, the fort of Knutshovet, which commanded the entrance to the port of Slipshaven. He then entered the port, and anchoring his warships close to the town of Nyborg, hurled such a deadly shower into the houses and closely packed streets, that after an hour's bombardment the unfortunate Swedes could bear it no longer. They surrendered at discretion, and the town was disgracefully pillaged. De Ruyter, who disapproved of this incident, with which the Dutch had nothing to do,\* left on the 28th for Lubeck to provision his ships.

The King of Sweden was painfully impressed by the defeat of his renowned troops, and the capture of Funen. It is said that his cheerfulness and his health were permanently impaired by these events. By the 9th of December, the king's representatives had signed a paper preliminary to the arrangement of peace. The King of Denmark received de Ruyter and his officers on their return from Lubeck with enthusiastic gratitude, and de

\* Looman, p. 78. This account is based upon Aitzema, Brandt, and Looman.



Ruyter was presented with a magnificent gold chain and a medal with a likeness of the king set in 42 diamonds. The rejoicings were great in Copenhagen, and de Ruyter was everywhere treated as the hero of the war. The States General also testified their satisfaction in a resolution, of which a copy was sent him. The winter of 1659 to 1660 was a severe one, and de Ruyter's fleet was frozen up in the Sound. He kept some of his soldiers in Copenhagen, in view of a possible attack by the Swedes across the ice, and he had to cut the ice away from his ships for the same reason. The cases of mortality and sickness on the Dutch ships greatly increased in this winter. Not until the 20th of February, 1660, was de Ruyter able to despatch any vessels. At that date he sent a galiot to reconnoitre the Swedish fleet assembled at Landscrona. It was found to number 36 ships, and de Ruyter accordingly sent his men-of-war to blockade them. Arrived at Landscrona himself on the 3rd of March, he sent some of his vessels home, and remained with the others. The King of Sweden had died on the 23rd of February. Peace, however, was not yet definitely agreed upon, and de Ruyter continued the blockade, in spite of the disappointment of the



English and French ambassadors. Not till the 6th of June was the treaty of peace signed. De Ruyter transported some of the Swedish troops from the island of Zealand across the Sound to Sweden, for which he received the thanks of both Danes and Swedes. The Swedish leader, Marshal Steinbok, then entertained him in the most splendid manner at Cronnenborg.

On the 7th of August a despatch was received from the States General recalling the Dutch fleet, and preparations were commenced for leaving. The Danish king, who had hoped to keep de Ruyter longer with him, now conveyed to him the highest marks of his admiration, by ennobling him and his family. The patents of nobility were accompanied by a coat-of-arms (which was granted to him at the same time),\* and a letter to the States General, declaring the high appreciation in which the services and qualities of de Ruyter were held in Denmark. Leaving Copenhagen August 13th, de Ruyter arrived at the Vlie on the 3rd of September. Crossing the Zuyder Zee in another vessel, he was run into, and was only

\* The Danes now (as they did with Nelson about a century and a half later) endeavoured to prove that the Admiral was of Danish descent.



saved from drowning by clinging to the rigging. With his family, in Amsterdam, he publicly gave thanks to Heaven for his preservation from so many dangers.

An event of the greatest importance to Holland had taken place in the spring of this year (1660), viz. the accession of Charles II. to the throne of England. The royal exile, who had been living at Breda, before leaving for his kingdom, went to Amsterdam, where a feast of the most magnificent description was given him. It is claimed by the Dutch that he had privately received, from time to time, large money presents from their wealthy capital. Charles told the deputies of the States General, that "his affection for them was as great as that of all the other kings put together." None of his predecessors had loved them as he did, and would continue to do. He referred to his sister, whom he left among them, and his nephew William, Prince of Orange, in the warmest terms, and showered his promises on the republic. Never were promises more delusive, nor obligations more quickly forgotten. In less than four years Charles II., without any serious cause, was the most active enemy of Holland in all Europe.



The year 1661 brought to the Dutch an increased sense of the importance of keeping a powerful force at the Straits of Gibraltar. De Ruyter was ordered to sail with nine men-of-war and a store-ship, about the end of May. On his way out he picked up an equal number of war-ships from various places. Stopping at Cadiz, he cleared the Straits soon after, and went in pursuit of the corsairs, who had been actively taking English, Dutch, and other vessels in the Mediterranean, but the swift sailers of the pirates were hard to come up with. The Dutch fleet went as far east as Malta, in February, 1662, and on its return called at Tunis. There the Rear-Admiral of Algiers, who had been chased by the fleet several times, sent a challenge to de Ruyter's rear-admiral, to fight him ship to ship, which de Ruyter agreed should be done, but the Algerian did not come out to try his chances. De Ruyter, whose functions seemed to add the powers of an ambassador to those of a commander, was authorized to negotiate with the principal States of North Africa—treaties which the States General would subsequently consider, and ratify or reject. At Tunis a suspension of arms for this purpose was agreed to for six months, to allow their



High Mightinesses time for consideration of the treaty proposals. Algiers also agreed to a truce for seven months. The States General sent de Ruyter a letter forbidding him to agree to the right of search at sea, which the Algerians were endeavouring to enforce. De Ruyter went on to Cadiz, and thence returned to Algiers, where negotiations were continued.

The English treaty with Algiers was shown to him. It allowed of English ships being visited at sea. De Ruyter declined to embody this clause in any treaty,\* and the truce being in force, he went on to Tripoli. There he was unable, though politely received, to make any treaty. He cleared for Tunis, and having received the authority of the States General, he concluded a treaty. Calling again at Algiers, he passed the Straits and entered Cadiz. Repassing the Straits, the Spanish coast of the Mediterranean was now skirted, and Algiers visited again. A treaty was made with Algiers in November, 1662,† and a truce of fifteen months agreed upon.

At the beginning of next year, de Ruyter was

\* "Vry schip, vry goed" ("Free ship, free cargo"), said de Ruyter (Looman, p. 89).

† 18th November, 1662 (Looman, p. 93).



again off the east coast of Spain, and on March 17th, he received orders from the States General recalling him and his fleet. He arrived on the 19th of April, 1663, and presented his clear and characteristically short report to their High Mightinesses. His stay in Holland continued till the 8th of May, 1664, when he left the Vlie accompanied by his son, Engel de Ruyter,\* who was commencing his naval career. The various ships of the squadron met off Malaga, where he had 12 vessels under his command, June 4th. The occasion for de Ruyter's reappearance in the Mediterranean was the fact that the Algerian pirates were again actively employed in capturing Dutch vessels, making slaves of their sailors, interfering with their trade, and searching their ships, in contravention of the treaty made with de Ruyter, and the truce of fifteen months, which had been extended four months further. The States General had proposed to England, France, and Spain a union of their respective fleets, in order to rid the sea of those irrepressible corsairs.† The King of France expressed his approval of the

\* Looman (p. 98), de Ruyter was very seriously ill shortly after.

† Aitzema, Wicquefort, Brandt.



proposal, but contented himself with offering the use of the ports of Toulon and Marseilles, as depots for Dutch provisions and munitions. The Spanish king placed his ports at the disposition of the States General, as harbours for their ships. Our Charles II. did indeed prepare his fleet, but with intentions the reverse of friendly. There was some indication of this unfriendliness on the part of the English king, when in June, after leaving Malaga, the English fleet, under de Ruyter's friend Admiral Lawson, refused to lower the flag, in answer to the Dutch salute, as required by the treaty of September, 1662. The reply to the inquiry as to why the flag was not lowered, was that the king had forbidden the lowering of the flag to any kings, princes, or republics.\*

A special commissioner and a fiscal had been sent with de Ruyter to conduct the negotiations with the Algerians on this occasion. The complaints of the Dutch emissaries, and their demands for indemnity, were met by recriminations and counter complaints, and by the threat that, unless

\* Looman (p. 98) says, June 13th. He also refers to de Ruyter's refusal to strike the flag after the above incident, and quotes de Witt's letter, which commanded him to strike it.



the peace were concluded on their conditions, the Algerians would imprison the Dutch consul. Van den Burg, who held that post, was in fear of his life, for he had seen the English consul harnessed in a cart by the Algerians, and forced by blows to drag a load of stones until, covered with mud by the children, he fell on the ground unable to move, and was thrown, heavily chained, into the deepest dungeon of the council house with the English merchants.

De Ruyter obtained the release of the Dutch consul, his secretary, and three attendants, in exchange for 37 Turkish and Moorish prisoners whom he had on board. He then declared war, and sailed on the 5th of July.

A few days later, off Alicante, he received private news that the English were bent upon quarrelling, and instructions to him to preserve meanwhile friendly relations with English officers whenever he might meet them. These injunctions he carefully carried out, and continued cruising in the Mediterranean, only once passing the Straits to Cadiz.\* Returning from thence to

\* Looman (p. 105) says the Spanish Viceroy gave the Dutch officers a dinner about this time at Valentia, when the Viceroy observed a custom then in vogue of honouring his guests by putting spectacles on his nose.



Malaga, he there received, on the 1st of September, full information of the English aggressions, and instructions how to act.

The origin of the ill-feeling between the English and Dutch at this time was their rivalry in the East Indian trade. The little Fort of St. George at Madras, frowning defiance over some half-dozen houses, formed, with them, the first buildings of the East India Company in India. A small guard of native troops was employed to protect the natives, who were servants of the company. Now, however, with the marriage of Charles II. to Catharine of Braganza, England obtained a new possession in Bombay, and the company a second factory, with excellent prospects of opening trade with the interior.

This was not pleasing intelligence to the inhabitants of the United Provinces, and the formation of a West Indian Company by the English, with business relations with the African Gold Coast, was also looked upon with apprehension. As de Guiche, a fairly impartial historian, relates, the Dutch colonies in the East were much larger than the English. The latter were, he says, not even self-supporting at this time, and it was the custom of the English East India Company to



send supplies to their factories from time to time.

Two vessels outward bound for this purpose were seized by the Dutch.\* Here then was a cause, or pretext, for a quarrel. The English being convinced that the ships were taken in order to impede their trade, demanded not only compensation for the loss of their vessels, but claimed that the United Provinces should make good the loss sustained by the colonies, which had suffered severely, and could certainly not be kept going without the necessary supplies. These "indirect claims" (as we should call them to-day), it would appear, were considered quite equitable by some people on the Continent, at the time, but the Dutch declined to pay for more than the value of cargo and vessel. The discussion was continued with increasing stiffness of purpose on both sides, till in January, 1664, Captain Robert Holmes, with about eight English ships was off Cape Verd, and apparently without provocation, took two ships belonging to the Dutch West India

\* De Guiche, "Memoires," p. 41. "Les Hollandais arrétèrent deux Vaisseaux qui en etaient chargés, l'un appellé Bonne-Aventure, et l'autre Bonne-Esperance; ce qu'ils firent sous les Pretextes ordinaires du Commerce."



Company. He then forced the garrison of the Fort of Cape Verd to surrender (with the Yacht *Crocodile*), took the Island of Goree, and also captured two small vessels. The employés of the Dutch West India Company were allowed to go home in a Portuguese ship. Two of them, journeying with the utmost expedition, brought the news of these events to the knowledge of the Dutch Government. Holmes now proceeded to the Guinea coast where he stormed the Fort of Tacorari (April 21). A few days after he appeared before the Castle of St. George del Mina, now Elmina, but the Dutch, being on their guard, he was unable to take it. Holmes, however, took Annemabo, Cape Coast Castle, and the Fort of Cormantin.

As soon as these proceedings were communicated to the States General, they complained to the English Government. The reply was received that the king had given orders to examine their charges. But instead of reparation, the States General received news that the English were preparing an additional force for the Guinea coast. The private diary of Samuel Pepys, written in cypher and never meant to be communicated to the public, shows what were the



feelings of the English king about this matter. Charles "do joy mightily" at the success of Holmes's expedition; and "laughing," said, "But how shall I do to answer this to the ambassador when he comes." \* Charles's letters to his sister Henrietta, Duchess of Orleans, now in the Foreign Office in Paris, show him as endeavour-

\* "Pepys' Diary," W. W. Gibbing's ed., 1890, p. 220, "September 29. Fresh newes of our beating the Dutch at Guinny quite out of all their castles almost, which will make them quite mad here at home sure. And Sir G. Carteret" (vice-chamberlain at the coronation of the king, a commissioner for the affairs of Tangiers, etc.) "did tell me that the king do joy mightily at it; but asked him, laughing, 'But,' says he, 'how shall I do to answer this to the ambassador when he comes?' Nay, they say that we have beat them out of the New Netherlands, too; so that we have been doing them mischief for a great while in several parts of the world, without publick knowledge or reason. Their fleete for Guinny is now, they say, ready and abroad, and will be going this week."

In the same edition, p. 82, September the 1st, 1661, is Pepys' impression of Holmes's character: "... A cunning fellow, and one (by his own confession to me) that can put on two several faces, and look his enemies in the face with as much love as his friends. But, good God! what an age is this, and what a world is this! that a man cannot live without playing the knave and dissimulation."

John Milton in England and de Ruyter in Holland, might have presented Pepys with examples of men who could live without so doing, even in that age of ignominy.



ing to appear friendly to the Dutch. "I find myself almost the only man in my kingdom who doth not desire war;" and yet, while still at peace with them, he rejoices at the taking of New York (then New Amsterdam) from Holland by Colonel Nichols, who was under the king's brother, the Duke of York.\* Thus the future history of the empire city of the West, received a new stamp, the importation of Dutch bricks was checked, and the inhabitants settled down (after being recaptured for a short time in 1672), to their new nationality.† Of course, Holmes was sent to the Tower, to keep up appearances; "but," says Pepys, "I perceive it is made matter of jest only."

The States General were not satisfied with the response of the English Government to their complaints. A meeting was held by a few of the leading members, when it was decided to send de Ruyter from the Mediterranean to the Guinea coast. This plan had the advantage of

\* For Charles II.'s very interesting letters, see Appendix II.

† The miniature "Directory of New Amsterdam," published as a curiosity, in the first page of the 1895 to 1896 Directory of New York city, shows how exclusively Dutch the population was at the date of its capture.



being expeditious, and there was not the same risk of his detachment being arrested, as there would be in the case of a fleet sent from Holland. Secrecy was all important. A full assemblage of their High Mightinesses would have made the scheme public. Under a resolution of the entire body, of date the 5th of August, seven of their number, including the Grand Pensionary, Johan de Witt, were to meet to consider a letter written in the previous month by de Ruyter and the commissioner Mortaigne, respecting the occurrences at Algiers. These seven members agreed to the proposal to send de Ruyter to the Guinea coast, and placed it on the paper as a resolution; and on the following Monday, August 11th, when the full assemblage met, a resolution passed on the 9th of August respecting the despatch of 12 warships had to be read for the last time, and afforded the opportunity to read very quickly and inaudibly, the minute of the meeting of the seven members. The general body of the meeting knew nothing of the import of what was being called over.

The seven members engaged the others in conversation, or managed to get them out of the room, while this reading was going on. The



copies of the resolution, etc., which had to be signed before being sent to de Ruyter, were very adroitly slipped through with other papers, and the secret was kept.

In a double envelope, the precious papers were delivered to de Ruyter at Malaga. He left the next day for Alicante, to provision; but the bakers there were fully occupied with the French fleet, and he therefore had an excuse to write to a merchant at Cadiz that, his biscuit being damaged and Alicante closed to him, he wished him to bake some thousands of biscuits, and to have ready some thousands of stock fish, also oil and vinegar. Outside of the harbour of Malaga, lay the English fleet, whose admiral, Lawson, friendly as ever, was actively curious to learn de Ruyter's plans, which, however, he had carefully kept from his own vice-admiral and captains. He had great difficulty in obtaining his provisions at Cadiz, where Lawson again met him.

On the 5th of October, with 12 men-of-war and a storeship, he sailed from Cadiz, saluting the English as he passed, and instructed his captains to make for Salee; but on the third day, he informed them of his instructions.

That same day the fleet met a Spanish barque



which was following the Spanish fleet to the Canaries, and, to disarm suspicion, the course was changed to W.N.W., only for the moment however. Next day, when continuing southwards, the Spanish fleet was seen, and de Ruyter again changed his course, this time to the S.E. By the 11th, the Grand Canary was reached. Failing to get the necessary pilots, or sailors who might give information as to Cape Verd, he set every sail, and, throwing off all reserve, with the force of a favourable wind behind him, pushed his vessels to their utmost speed. On the 17th the Dutch sighted Cape Verd, and by the 22nd they had reached the island of Goree, where the banners of the Royal English Company were seen floating from the battlements they had so recently and unjustly taken from the Dutch. Nine English ships, only one of which was a man-of-war, were anchored near the lower fort. An inquiry was sent to de Ruyter which somewhat resembled the historical question, "Is it peace, Jehu?" and de Ruyter's reply might almost have taken the form of the famous answer to Joram; but he preferred to explain that he was not at war with England, but was come to take back that which belonged to his countrymen,



and to resist the injuries and insolence offered to them. The English were allowed to retain some of their mercantile vessels, after taking out the goods which had been seized from the Dutch. The fortresses were delivered to de Ruyter, whose force was too large to be resisted, and the small English garrison marched out with banners flying. They were, besides, allowed to take their two cannon with them, their clothes, and their own furniture, and were to be provided with food, and landed on the coast of Gambia, Sierra Leone, and Cormantin.

Rear-admiral van der Zaan meantime, exploring the coast of the mainland at Cape Verd, found a negro chief who spoke Dutch, and who, on hearing de Ruyter's name, said he had known a boatswain's boy of that name from Flushing, when he was himself a mere lad. Taken before de Ruyter, he proved to be his friend of 45 years before, Jan Company. The admiral, delighted to renew the impressions of his boyhood, received him with the greatest friendliness. Jan told de Ruyter he was still a Christian, and always remembered "Our Father," and "I believe in God," but as his children and his people always laughed when he repeated these things, he thought it best



to remain a Christian in his heart, and to serve God according to his lights. He preferred living in his own poor country to going back to Zealand.

De Ruyter presented him with clothes, and other things which were of importance in the eyes of his people, and signalized his departure for the shore with a discharge of several guns.

The English private soldiers who were prisoners, and their Dutch guards, on the night of the next day became sadly intoxicated, and a riot, which was at one moment very dangerous, ensued. The 6th of November saw the Dutch fleet again at sea. De Ruyter, finding himself encumbered with three of the English vessels that he had taken with him, allowed them to go, with an agreement not to trade in the neighbourhood of the Dutch West India Company. He was now delayed by contrary winds, and decided, for the benefit of his crews, to touch at the coast of Sierra Leone, and on the 4th of December he managed to enter the river of that name. Here some of the crews were landed, wood and fresh water were obtained, also lemons and other fruits, and the ships were cleaned.

The English merchants living on a neighbour-



ing island were punished for ill treatment of Dutch settlers, whose goods they had taken. Another of the eight English merchantmen which de Ruyter had taken was here released; and on the 15th of December the fleet sailed for the Guinea coast, but was much delayed by a calm. The Cape of Palmas was at last seen about five leagues N.N.W. on the 29th of December, 1664.

Cape "Tres Puntas," or "Three Points," on the Gold Coast, was reached on the 4th of January, 1665. This being close to the fort of Witsen, or Tacorari—which Holmes had taken and left in possession of an English garrison, it was thought best to inquire of the natives what was the state of things in the vicinity. De Ruyter resolved to attack; but, hearing that a small English flotilla was off the coast, he first sent a despatch to General Valkenburg, commanding the Dutch forces at Elmina—the place Holmes had failed to take—announcing his arrival. The same evening he dropped anchor opposite Fort Tacorari. To his summons to surrender, the English replied, "Come to-morrow morning." Next day the Dutch envoys were fired upon by negroes in ambush near the fort, and de Ruyter at once brought in five of his ships of least draught, and



under cover of their fire landed about 500 men, who defeated the negroes after a tough encounter, when the fort and its six Englishmen surrendered. By advice of General Valkenburg it was blown up.

A few days after these events, news was received that Prince Rupert was to be despatched with a fleet to attack de Ruyter. The proposed assault of Fort Cormantin, which was beyond Cape Coast Castle, was therefore postponed, and the vessels were all brought up to Elmina. On the 4th of February, however, de Ruyter determined, against the advice of Valkenburg, to attempt the capture. The negroes of the state of Fantin were enlisted as allies by the promise of payments amounting in all to 18,750 livres. The landing party of nearly 1000 soldiers and sailors was carefully chosen and prepared, the squadron sailed for Fort Annemabo on the coast, about half a league from Fort Cormantin. There the Dutch waited for the negroes, who kept them in suspense till the 7th of February, when they joined, to the number of 1200, in the attack. The English then blew up Annemabo, and withdrew their scanty forces to Fort Cormantin. Before this could be attacked, Fort Adja, in the



Bay of Adja, had to be taken, which was accomplished after fighting with the English and their body of negroes, the heavy surf, and the fire from the guns of Fort Cormantin, adding greatly to the difficulty.

The next day a landing was affected with great danger, the boats being much damaged by the violence of the waves, and the water-barrels and other necessaries which the men took with them being lost or broken. A summons to surrender was sent to Selwyn, the English commander, who refused, and the march towards the fortress commenced. In addition to the fire from the cannon of Cormantin, the column was much incommoded by a cannon placed on a high hill on the left flank. The Count van Hoorn, who was in command, having obtained a guide, led the men up the hill, and the cannon was taken; but, as the position was commanded by the English guns, it was resolved to push on, in spite of the native force which resisted gallantly, but after a severe struggle was completely routed. Once at the foot of the walls, ladders were quickly placed, and hand grenades were flung into the fort. Resistance being now hopeless, and the fort having been entered in several places, Selwyn



and his 57 followers surrendered. The famous negro chief, Cabesse, however, cut the throats of his son and two slaves, and then cut his own, dying rather than fall into the hands of his enemies. There were 28 cannon in the place.

At Elmina de Ruyter received despatches informing him that neither Rupert's fleet nor the Dutch reinforcement for himself would come, but that two men-of-war would escort the store-ships carrying extra provisions for him. He was further desired to attack Fort Cormantin, and the English possessions in any part of the world but Europe. In consequence of these instructions, he asked General Valkenburg for his advice as to attacking Cape Coast Castle, and to remaining with the fleet on the Guinea coast. It was, however, thought best not to attempt the proposed attack, as the negroes of Fetu would defend the fort and the very difficult coast in overwhelming force—nor was it now considered necessary to keep de Ruyter and his fleet any longer off Guinea. The work of our cunning freebooter, Captain Holmes, had now been entirely undone.

A curious piece of justice had to be executed before the sailing of the fleet. Three sailors,



having landed and rejoiced together in another man's house, became so intoxicated that they quarrelled and fought with their knives, in doing so upsetting their candles. Their host, entering the room in the dark to separate them, was murdered. The three witnesses being intoxicated, it was impossible to decide who committed the murder—accordingly lots were drawn, and one was hanged. After the hanging, when about to be interred, he recovered himself. General Valkenburg, who commanded on shore, decided to hang him again, but de Ruyter said this was the interposition of God for an innocent man, who had been made to suffer enough for his own sins, and had been an example to others. He was therefore spared, and continued to look upon de Ruyter for the rest of his life, as he expressed it, as a “second father.”

The fleet, consisting of 12 men-of-war, the store-ship, and the English vessel *St. Martha*, sailed on the 27th of February, S.S.E., the winds prevailing being westerly. On the 6th of March they crossed the line, passing the islands of St. Thomas and Annabon. At last, on the 12th, they got what they were searching for, a south wind, on which they steered west, a quarter south,



and then W.S.W., some of the ships sailing badly, and their captains being censured for not keeping near the flagship. Instructions were given by de Ruyter when at sea on various points of conduct in sailing, or when in action, or afterwards, as to pillage, etc.

He arrived off Bardadoes on the 23rd of April, and on the 30th his flagship, the *Mirror*, led the way into the bay, but the English fire from two forts, and the vessels lying close in, was well sustained, and the Dutch being unable to get near them, retired much damaged. They went on to Martinique, and exchanging powder with the French Governor there for provisions, left on the 6th of May for the English islands, Montserrat, where they took five merchantmen, and Nevis, where they caught four. Six more prizes shortly after gratified their skill. De Ruyter next visited St. Christophers, an island then half English, half French, and sold some of his prizes to the French. St. Eustache, a Dutch island, was then touched, more prizes were sold, and the squadron sailed on May 17th for Newfoundland. It was already known to de Ruyter that war was declared between England and the United Provinces.

The fleet passed Cape Race about the 14th of



June, and entered St. Johns two days later. Seven prizes were taken about this time. Having 300 English prisoners to care for, it was agreed to give them three small prizes and five weeks provisions, and to let them go. Some other prizes were burnt, and now, furnished with further provisions, de Ruyter sailed on the 21st of June, and passing to the south of the Faroe Isles, reached the coast of Norway about the 22nd of July. Here he learnt from a Dutch vessel sent to meet him, that the United Provinces had sustained a severe defeat in the North Sea. As he drew near Bergen, he learnt that the English had now the command of the sea, and he assumed that his own return would be eagerly looked for by their fleet, as was actually the case. It was, in fact, only by pure good fortune that he escaped them, and after a very anxious and protracted voyage reached Delfzyl, on the western branch of the Ems, on the 6th of August, 1665.

On the 14th of March, 1665, the English king had issued a declaration that the United Provinces, in respect of the instructions given to de Ruyter, were aggressors, that the ships of England, having received a commission from the High Admiral, might attack any Dutch vessels, and that any



vessels carrying Dutch property might be seized. Captain Thomas Allen had begun seizing the trading vessels of the United Provinces at Cadiz in 1664.

Thus the Dutch democracy, busying itself too much with the profits of its counting-house, and not caring to pay for a naval marine commensurate to the vast extent of its trade, presented a spectacle so alluring to the foreign burglar, English or French, that only one result was likely to ensue.

Of the two royal rascals, Charles II. and Louis XIV., the former considered himself fully prepared to begin his depredations, but as Louis was by treaty bound to maintain the cause of the Dutch against unprovoked attack, it was necessary that Charles should show as good a case as possible. Hence his numerous disingenuous letters to his sister, the Duchess of Orleans. Louis, on the other hand, with no love for Holland, did not think the time suitable for the prosecution of his inherited policy which, directed against the Austrian dominions, necessarily involved the control of the Netherlands on the flank of any French expansion towards the East.

The English fleet was out before that of their



opponent. Rupert and Monk (now Duke of Albemarle) with 109 men-of-war and 28 fireships, etc., with 21,006 soldiers and sailors, hung on the coast of Holland, had taken 10 or 12 merchantmen near the Texel, and had been driven home by a storm, when Wassenaar went in pursuit.\*

The Dutch were preparing to build 48 new ships, but meanwhile they were able to send with Wassenaar 112 men-of-war and 30 fireships and ketches, carrying 22,365 men.†

Wassenaar had imperative orders to fight, the command of the sea being uppermost in the minds of the States General; but, before he met his antagonists, he had fallen in with, and taken nine English ships trading with Hamburg, and valued at £200,000 to £300,000.

About three o'clock on the morning of Saturday

\* "Columna Rostrata" (p. 159). Brandt says reports give 97 and 115 ships. Lefèvre Pontalis *Vie de Jean de Witt* (p. 341) relying on de Jonge (i. p. 783), and Wicquefort (iii. p. 196), says English 109, 21 fireships, 7 galiots, 4192 guns, 21,000 men.

† "Columna Rostrata" (p. 160). Brandt says over 100 men-of-war. Lefèvre Pontalis says Dutch fleet, 103 large vessels, 11 fireships, 12 galiots (without counting 40 vessels intended as a reinforcement), and it was armed with 4800 guns and 22,000 men. For Official particulars of Wassenaar's fleet, see Appendix III.



the 13th of June (O.S. June 3rd, see Lediard), Wassenaar engaged the English off Lowestoft. Sacrificing the advantage of the wind to his desire to get at the English leader, he advanced far before the rest of his fleet, and commenced the contest with the Duke of York. Four of his fastest sailers shot out of line after him at some distance. A terrific conflict was carried on by these vessels. The English admiral was in some danger, the blood and brains of three officers standing near, being scattered over him by a shot.

Almost at the beginning of the engagement apparently so irregularly begun, Lieut.-Admiral Stellingwerf was killed, and also Lieut.-Admiral Cortenaar, who was to succeed Wassenaar in case the latter were injured. Cortenaar's crew, in a panic, took his vessel out of action, and were followed by a part of his squadron. Sandwich, with the English Blue Squadron, was dividing the Dutch fleet at the centre in two parts. This most decisive step he accomplished by about one o'clock. Shortly after, Wassenaar's ship blew up, with a fearful uproar, its wreckage being scattered far and wide. Of the 500 gallant fighters on board, only five were saved.

Two separate groups of the Dutch vessels had



fouled one another, and, being struck by the fire-ships at the same time, a large portion of the Dutch line instantly became one extended blaze. In the flight which followed these catastrophies, several vessels were lost. The Dutch admitted to a loss of 18 in all. They are said to have lost 7000 men, of whom 2000 were prisoners. Their admiral was killed, as well as three lieut.-admirals. The foreign accounts give the English loss as four ships and 1500 men. The English historians say one ship lost and 250 men killed, including a vice- and rear-admiral, and 340 wounded.\*

Such a defeat might well spread consternation through the Netherlands. This was not lessened by the appearance of Sandwich in the North Sea with 100 ships. The Dutch, however, set themselves at once to refitting the shattered remnants of their great fleet.

\* Lieut.-Admiral Johan Evertszoon, who was most unjustly blamed for this terrible defeat, on his arrival at Brielle was attacked by the populace, and twice thrown into the water before a rescue was effected, and he was taken to his ship. After a searching examination of the facts, de Witt wrote, that instead of punishment, he deserved to be rewarded for his conduct in the battle. Evertszoon, however, resigned in favour of his brother Cornelis, who was ten years his junior. They were the grandsons of Evert Heindricssen, who came from Zouteland to Flushing in 1572, and was a ship captain. His son Jan was a captain in the Dutch navy.



## AT THE SUMMIT.

## THE ENGLISH WAR.

CORNELIS VAN TROMP was appointed to the chief command, but upon de Ruyter's almost unhopedor return, de Ruyter replaced him. Then van Tromp refused to serve under him, and only consented after considerable pressure. This was not the only occasion on which van Tromp was to evince a desire to rival de Ruyter. He was much the younger man of the two, having been born in 1629, and was, therefore, now only in his thirty-seventh year. His brilliant courage and his self-confidence had been manifest since when at nineteen years of age he had commanded a small squadron against the Algerians. He had greatly distinguished himself in the Mediterranean under van Gaalen, and in the recent fight under Wassenaar. As the second son of the great van Tromp, his pride was equal to his courage, and he could



not forget that his father and grandfather had fallen in battle with the English. A warm supporter of the House of Orange, to which his family was greatly indebted, he was an undisguised opponent of de Witt, who styled him a young man with more fire than reason. In manner he chose to be abrupt and laconic, even in his dealings with the deputies of the provinces. On several occasions the unrestrained fury of his attacks in battle proved highly successful, but this quality did not excuse his repeated disobedience to express orders (issued by his commander), which led to great confusion in several instances, and, after his final quarrel with de Ruyter, to his dismissal.

Three commissioners had already been appointed (the Grand Pensionary de Witt being of the number) to accompany the admiral, whoever he might be, in order to represent the sovereignty of the States General. De Ruyter was made Lieut.-Admiral of Holland and West Friesland, and commander-in-chief. The late Prince of Orange had been full admiral, and that post was not filled till his son William of Orange took it. About the middle of August, de Ruyter hoisted his flag on the *Delfland*. The resusci-



tated fleet contained 93 men-of-war or frigates, with 4337 pieces of artillery, 15,051 sailors, 1283 marines, and 3300 soldiers. De Ruyter divided his fleet into four squadrons, and put to sea, but the opposed fleets were not destined to meet again in the year 1665, and though both took prizes, and were driven from their routes by furious tempests, no fresh triumph was to be secured by either. About the 11th of September, Sandwich returned with a part of the fleet to England, the remainder following in the course of a few weeks. The Plague was raging in London, and the fleet was laid up for the winter. The Dutch ranged from Bergen in the north to the English coast by Yarmouth and Lowestoft and the Doggerbank. The States General, by an order of the 30th of July, had prescribed as the admiral's first duty, the protection of the vessels returning through the Channel and round the north of Scotland, and as his second the destruction of the enemy's fleet. De Ruyter concerted with the commissioners, plans for enabling the units of his fleet to work in greater harmony, plans for rendering the sailors' life more comfortable, for the improvement of the food, of the vessels, of the medical service, and of the discipline, which had grown very lax



among the captains,\* as also for increasing the intelligence of the officers, and for the increase of the popularity of the service. He issued orders which were to enable the fleet to carry out the evolutions of battle with greater certainty than heretofore, and he exercised his fleets in sham fights from time to time. Early in November, the Dutch fleet went into harbour for the winter, though privateers were allowed out for four months longer.

The States General decreed, on the 16th of December, that the trade with Greenland, and the whale fishery, should cease for the following year. On the 1st of February it was further resolved to stop *all* the fisheries. The repairing and the building of the fleet went on rapidly. Louis XIV. had declared war on England on the 26th of January, and on the 18th of April peace

\* Discipline. Brandt says (p. 319), French edition, September 26, 1665, sentence was passed on Captain Wildschut, who, on the 9th of May, had abandoned his admiral; and Lieut. Bogaart, who, in the fight of the 13th of June, had disobeyed his captain. Four other officers were punished at the same time. A Captain Pieterszoon was punished October 27th, for entering the Texel without permission, at a time when his admiral was expected to give battle to the English.



was concluded with the Bishop of Munster, both of which circumstances greatly encouraged the Dutch. The fleet began coming out of the Texel on the 1st of June. It consisted, according to Brandt, of 85 men-of-war and frigates, carrying 4615 cannon, and 21,909 sailors and soldiers.

Other accounts vary from 91 to 100 ships.\* This fleet was divided into three squadrons; the first, commanded by de Ruyter, contained 28 vessels. Among his officers were Lieut.-Vice- and Rear-Admirals A. van Nes, de Liefde, and J. van Nes. The second squadron was under Lieut.-Admirals Evertszoon and de Vries, and consisted of 28 ships. The third squadron, that of van Tromp the younger and Meppel, had 29 vessels (Brandt, p. 348).

The English fleet was under the Duke of Albemarle and Prince Rupert. It contained

\* "Columna Rostrata" (p. 167) says, Dutch fleet 91, carrying 4716 guns and 22,462 men, which figures he quotes from *Nauwkeurig Verhaal gedrukt door Order van de Heeren Staten*. From the *mémoires* of the Comte de Guiche, who was present during the four days, it appears the Dutch had about 84 ships of war (see pp. 247 and 249).

In Colomb's "Naval Warfare" the Dutch force is computed at 96 ships, 4716 guns, 20,642 men.



80 ships,\* but Rupert had committed the error of weakening it by withdrawing 20 vessels to search for the French fleet near the Isle of Wight. Albemarle, thinking to obtain a victory in his absence, sailed for the coast of Flanders in search of de Ruyter. Little did he imagine that he was taking his diminished fleet, of about 60, into the very jaws of death.

De Ruyter, coming south from the Texel, had anchored on the night of the 10th about five leagues from Dunkirk. It was not his intention to pass into the Channel until the east wind had fallen. He anticipated an early encounter with the enemy, and summoned his admirals and captains on board the flagship. De Ruyter, like Napoleon and Nelson, fully understood the effect to be produced on the fighting man by a few simple and telling phrases on the eve of battle,

\* "Columna Rostrata" (p. 167) says, English had between 50 and 60 ships; refers to letter of de Ruyter to the States ("Zeehelden tweede Deel," p. 222), where he computes them as being, great and small, 70 sail.

Comte de Guiche (p. 249) says 57. In Colomb's "Naval Warfare" the English force is taken as 81 ships, 4460 guns and 21,085 men, before Rupert took away 20 ships. Brandt says the English fleet consisted of 80 vessels, but on the second day he speaks of 50 only being counted.



and he probably knew that his voice and gestures would deepen the impression. He accordingly addressed his assembled officers as follows:—

“The time has nearly arrived when we shall meet the enemy. The well-being of the State depends upon the result of the coming battle. We have to deal with proud enemies, who, against all reason, seek our destruction. Let us fight, then, piously for our fatherland, for our liberty, for our dearest treasures, our wives and children. The eyes of all the world are now upon us; we have here the chance to wipe out the dishonour of last year by our bravery. Behave then as honest and brave men, bearing yourselves as you ought. We have no need to fear our enemies, nor to despise them, because they are sailors and soldiers. Be resolved, then, to conquer, or to die. Trust that God will bless our just cause, as we fight only from necessity and to gain peace. Besides, be assured that courage will be rewarded—but the cowardly perjurer shall be punished by death. Not only is honour to be gained here, but booty. Let each one then remember his honour and his oath, and follow my example. Each one knows what instructions I have given him, let each do his duty.”



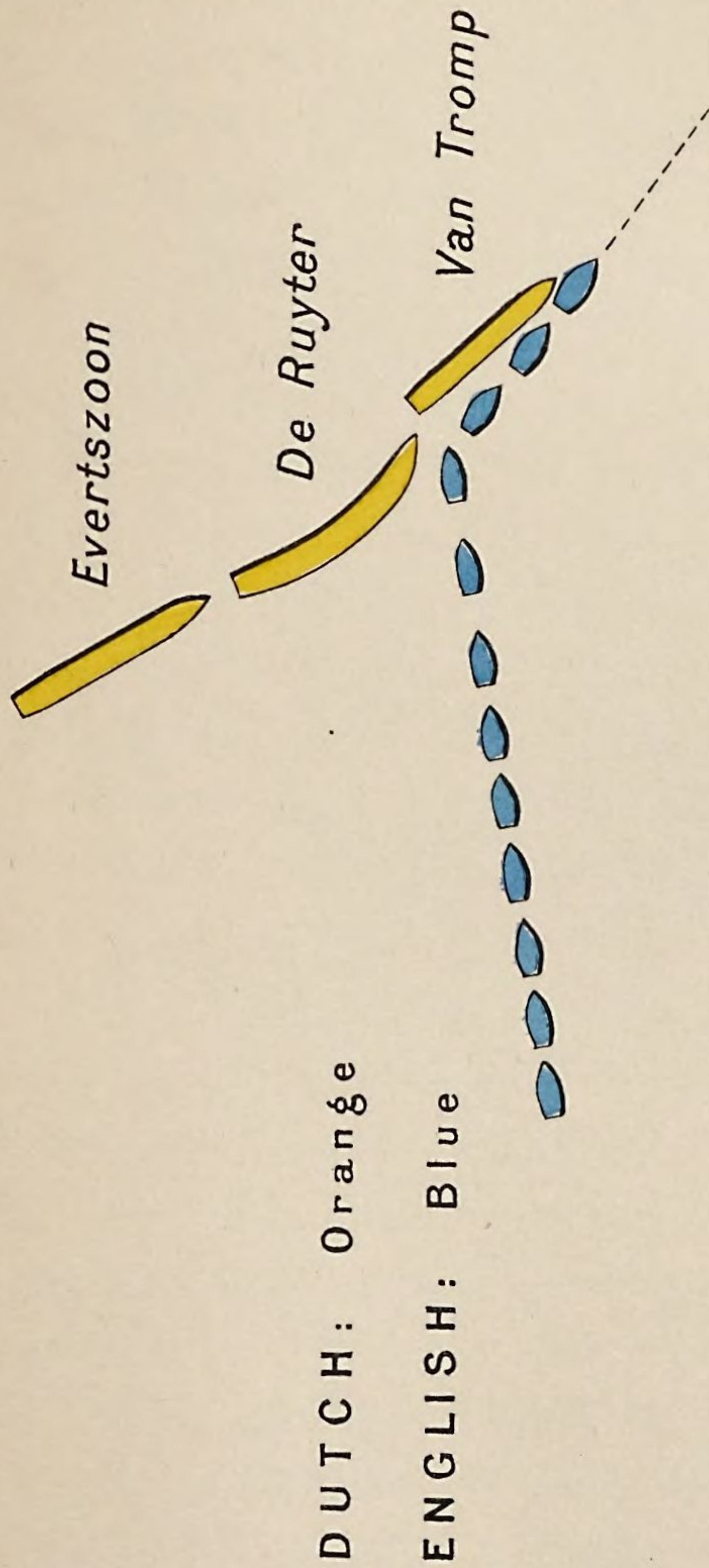
All present having replied that they were prepared to die for their country, de Ruyter concluded by saying: "In the name of the fatherland, I thank you for your good intentions; I hope that you will indeed show your courage."

The Dutch fleet was anchored in three clusters, their form, so far as it approached a line, being like that of a slightly bent bow, the ends of which pointed about north and south. The northerly division, which was the van, was commanded by Evertszoon and de Vries, de Ruyter was in the centre, where the bow bent out towards the west, and van Tromp's cluster, the rear, lay south of him.

On the morning of the 11th of June, the wind had veered to the S.S.W., and the Dutch look-outs perceived the English fleet bearing down on them with the wind, and formed in line ahead. So swiftly did Albemarle's vessels approach, that the Dutch, unable to weigh anchor in time, were obliged to cut their cables. By eleven o'clock a large portion of the English force was concentrated on van Tromp's division, before de Ruyter could render any substantial assistance, and going on the starboard tack, passed on in a south-easterly direction. Van Tromp went on



# FOUR DAYS FIGHT JUNE 11<sup>TH</sup> 1666



Wind S.S.W.







the same tack, his division and Albemarle's vessels pursuing parallel courses.

After a time, however, they were forced to turn and come N.N.W. on the port tack, in order to avoid the shoals of the French coast, into which they would inevitably have run. The English were still to windward, and therefore, in the prolonged exchange of broadsides, which were producing terrific effect on sails and rigging, they were, owing to the force of the wind, so inclined as to be unable to use their lower tier which carried the heaviest guns. Though suffering from this great disadvantage, the British fleet, still maintaining the line of battle, which was first introduced about this time, were inflicting considerable damage on the Dutch divisions, massed together as they were in the older style of warfare. The greatest courage was shown on both sides; but in the afternoon, as Albemarle's line was going N.N.W., the van, which had been originally the rear, was subjected to the whole weight of De Ruyter's centre and his rear, which had joined the fight later than Van Tromp's division. The great preponderance in numbers of the Dutch began to tell; but, fortunately, before this occurred, the English vessels had been so



well fought, that the ships of van Tromp and Rear-Admiral van Nes were in such a damaged condition as required them to be taken to the Dutch shores for repairs. The *Duivenoorde*, Captain Terlon, was in flames, and the French Comte de Guiche—the historian of the fight—(with his brother-in-law, the Prince of Monaco) was glad to escape certain death by leaping on to a passing Dutch vessel. De Ruyter, at this crisis, was able to surround and outnumber a large portion of our line, and here the less scientific formation of the Dutch had its advantages. On the English side, the ship of Sir William Berkley, vice-admiral of the White, was cut off with two others. Berkley, however, with a courage which was the admiration of friends and foes, continued to fight his ship after she was boarded, refusing quarter, and defended himself alone against his enemies, four or five of whom he sacrificed to his sense of honour, till, his throat cut by a musket ball, he reeled into his cabin, and was found lying dead on a table, which was streaming with his blood.\*

Another admiral of the White Squadron, Sir John Harman, was also cut off, and his vessel

\* "Col. Rostrata."



shattered by de Ruyter and others when a fire-ship was sent against him. His lieutenant, however, "in the midst of the flames, loosed the grappling iron, and swung back on board his own ship unhurt." Another fireship grappled him on the larboard, and in a moment his sails were in flames; many of the crew at once took to the sea, when Harman, rushing among the others, his sword drawn, declared he would kill any one who tried to leave the ship or failed to do his duty. Inspired by his example, the crew soon conquered the flames, but not before a falling yard had broken the gallant admiral's leg. A third fireship was promptly sent in, but his guns destroyed her, and then, the famous Cornelis Evertszoon, Lieut.-Admiral of Zealand, came through the gathering darkness alongside him, and offered him quarter. "No, no; it is not come to that yet," was the answer, accompanied by a broadside, which killed Evertszoon and a number of his men, while, in the pause that followed, Harman, with his 40 men left out of 300, slowly carried his wreck out of action to Harwich. It was now about ten at night, and the firing ceased, though some flaming ships lit up the sky and the wreck-strewn sea. The English admit to a loss



of three ships, but claim two Dutch destroyed. Night was only the preparation for the morning. Well might leaders and men busy themselves on both sides. De Ruyter had during the day borne himself as the responsible leader of the force entrusted with the welfare of his country. Where danger required his presence he had been found—the flagship, which had lost her maintopmast (“Col. Rostrata”), bore evidence of the severity of the struggle.

But the admiral’s position forbade his acting with the reckless fury of van Tromp, who, after rushing through and through the English line, ended by reducing his first vessel to such a condition that he had to leave her, and conveyed his hardly less damaged second ship to the Dutch coast for repairs in the night, and possibly for the purpose of bringing up reinforcements for the morrow. De Ruyter had been just able to hold in check a smaller force of the enemy, whose presumption was the wonder of his fleet, and he felt that the critical moment was reserved for the next day. He called a council early on the following morning, the 12th of June, and at about six a.m.\*

\* See Sir J. Jordan’s “Log of the *Vanguard*,” in Penn’s “Memorials.”



the attack was begun by the English, the wind being southerly.

As on the first day, Albemarle still had the weather gage, but at times this advantage was of little moment, as the fleets occasionally fell into a dead calm. The Dutch received an accession of strength in 12 or 13 vessels, which, Brandt says, van Tromp brought back repaired in the early morning, or, as Admiral Jordan alleges, a reinforcement "of 16 great ships, which gave them great encouragement." De Guiche could now only count 43 or 44 English vessels, while the Dutch, he says, had 80. As the two fleets passed and repassed one another, the cannonade was as fierce as on the first day, and, in consequence of the calm, far more effective. Later on the wind freshened, and van Tromp getting impatient of a contest which showed no signs of victory for either combatant, decided, on his own responsibility, to take some of his ships to the further side of the enemy's van. The English were going eastward on the starboard tack. The Dutch were passing them to leeward in a parallel course, when van Tromp, with a portion of his rear, was seen by de Ruyter to be on the English right, trying to keep to windward. Perceiving



the danger into which van Tromp was running, de Ruyter decided to take the whole of his fleet to the other side of the English line. Albemarle did not succeed in preventing this, but he managed to keep the wind. Vice-Admiral van der Hulst, who was with van Tromp, was killed, the *De Liefde* was burnt, and four shattered vessels had to be sent off to the Texel. An attempt to capture de Ruyter, by the vessels through whom he had passed, failed, owing to his skill and the timely arrival of support. Between three and four o'clock his foremast fell and his great yardarm. When van Tromp went on board de Ruyter, after the junction of their vessels, the sailors were loud in their cheers, but de Ruyter, turning to de Guiche, said, "Ah, monsieur, this is not the hour for rejoicing; it is the time for tears." There was a moment when it seemed likely that the English would prove victorious, but their numbers were too small to allow of their pressing their advantage. About four o'clock they passed the Dutch on the port tack westward, but it was not till five, when the relative positions of the two fleets were much the same, that Albemarle, who had at last realized the futility of continuing the struggle for a victory, decided to keep on in order to get the



support of Rupert near his own shores. He retired in perfect order, the Dutch following slowly, while night again closed the scene. The English burnt three badly damaged ships.

The next morning, Whit Sunday, June 13th, "the wind was variable; easterly" (Jordan). Albemarle continued to retreat, 16 ships in a line abreast forming the rear, with all disabled ships in front—the course steered was west. Unhappily Sir George Ayscue, in the *Royal Prince*, one of the largest and heaviest ships in the English navy, ran on the Galloper Shoal, and, being threatened by fireships, was compelled to surrender to van Tromp. De Ruyter burnt the vessel, to prevent its being retaken. The English were then steering about W.S.W. Rupert's squadron was seen towards evening, and Albemarle's fleet was not further attacked that day.

In the early morning of the fourth day, June 4th, de Ruyter called a council of war. He addressed it as follows: "Here you see the English, and there the Dutch war fleets. The last few days have shown all that the English can do against us. The one day's fight, on which the prosperity or misfortune of the country depends, you still



have to go through with me. The power of defending the fatherland is entrusted to your hands. The States General, the fathers of the fatherland, our relations, our wives and children, the dearest treasures, long for a happy issue. Determine not to let the laurels you have gained in three days' fighting be taken from you. It is the same enemy you saw fly yesterday. Show yourselves soldiers. It is better to die for the fatherland than to retreat like scoundrels, leaving it a prey to the enemies. You must fight for liberty, or become slaves, or die in English prisons of hunger, misery, and stench. If you help one another faithfully, the victory is, through God's blessing, in your hand. You already see the enemy coming. Nothing more can be done with the tongue; you must now fight with the fist."

Thus encouraged, the Dutch officers betook themselves to their ships. Meanwhile, such of the crews as had been prisoners in England, incited their comrades to revenge.

Between eight and nine o'clock the fight began "very fiercely," as Jordan says. The Dutch, according to Prince Rupert's letter (quoted in "*Columna Rostrata*"), were almost out of sight when he and



Albemarle went in search of them. Van Tromp, Sweers, and de Liefde were all dismasted in the struggle which followed, and the flagship of Rupert was badly pierced. The Dutch had the weather gage, but the English fleet passed through them, and was the most dispersed of the two in doing so. De Ruyter, who, alive to every move in the game, had already saved de Liefde, now saw his opportunity of overwhelming the force nearest to him, and, being seconded by those about him, completed the disorganization of the English fleet.

Among the incidents of the terrible struggle that was going on, none is more worthy of recollection than that of Admiral Mings (whose career began as a common sailor),\* and who on this awful day had done all that duty could expect of him, being shot in the throat, refused to have his wound attended to, but holding back the flowing blood with his hand, continued to take part in the fight till another ball struck him in the same place, and instantly ended his heroic life.

“At seven most of our great ships, disabled in masts, yards, rigging, want of men to ply guns,

\* He was the son of a shoemaker. See Pepys' diary and “Col. Rostrata.”



powder and shot were all spent, forced our retreat," says Jordan.

At about that time a thick mist fell upon the two fleets, and separated the gallant men who had given a prolonged spectacle of courage and tenacity, which has never been equalled in any naval contest to this day. The English admitted a loss of nine to 10 ships, in addition to the *Royal Prince*, 600 men killed, 1100 wounded, and 2000 taken prisoners; and they affirmed that the Dutch lost a large number of men-of-war and some 5000 men killed and wounded, among the former three vice-admirals. The Dutch, though they admitted a loss of four or five men-of-war, claimed to have destroyed or taken 17—but they only took home six English vessels.\*

\* Captain Mahan's account of the four days' fight in his "Influence of Sea Power upon History," makes the varying features of this struggle perfectly clear, while investing them with the suggestiveness and interest that attaches to all his writings.

He bases his view of these fights largely upon the account of de Guiche, and on a letter recently discovered from "a Dutch gentleman serving on board de Ruyter's ship, to a friend in France," published in the *Revue Maritime et Coloniale*.

Mahan takes the numbers of the English ships to be about 60, the Dutch about 100. Mahan accepts, as regards



What was de Ruyter's conduct after the victory he had gained? Fortunately for us the Comte de Guiche was in his vessel on the fourth day, and his account tells us that de Ruyter, whose simple manners resembled those of the patriarchs or the ancient Romans, gave thanks to God, to whom he ascribed the victory. De Guiche found the great admiral, simple and modest as ever, next day sweeping out his cabin and feeding his fowls.\*

the result, the opinion of Lefevre Pontalis, "*Vie de Jean de Witt*," as follows: "The States lost in these actions three vice-admirals, 2000 men, and four ships. The loss of the English was 5000 killed and 3000 prisoners, and they lost besides 17 ships, of which nine remained in the hands of the victors."

N.B.—It may be here remarked that Lefevre Pontalis, in his references to Chatham and Rochester, does not seem quite impartial.

No description of the four days' fight is complete which does not take into account Admiral Colomb's relation of the event. It is not largely quoted here, partly because it is based to some extent on "*Columna Rostrata*," and partly because it seems preferable to give foreign evidence in the limited space at our disposal.

\* De Guiche "*Mémoires*," p. 252. "He must be looked upon in the same way as one of those old Romans who in the infancy of the Republic, often exchanged the spade for the general's baton, and returned from one to the other. There is in his character a depth of goodness and uprightness, which cannot be expressed." Page 268, "I have never seen



De Guiche also breaks into ecstasies over the English navy. "Nothing," he says, "equals the beautiful order of the English at sea. Never was a line drawn straighter than that formed by their ships, etc."\*

It is said that when Rupert's force was coming to assist Albemarle, the ships which had already fought so hard a fight for three days, advanced with drums beating and trumpets sounding to charge again through the Dutch ("Col. Rostrata," p. 172). The Grand Pensionary de Witt told the English ambassador, Sir William Temple, "that we gained more honour to our nation, and to the invincible courage of our seamen, than by the other two victories, that he was sure their men

him otherwise than even tempered, and when victory was certain, he always said it is God who gives it us. In any disorder, and when loss seemed certain, he appeared to me to be thinking only of the misfortune of his country, but always submissive to the will of God. It might be said that he has something of the freedom and the absence of courtliness of the patriarchs; and finally, the day after victory, I found him sweeping out his room and feeding his chickens."

\* Evelyn's diary, June 17th, 1666: "I went on shore at Sheerness. . . . Here I beheld the sad spectacle, more than halfe that gallant bulwark of the kingdom miserably shattered, hardly a vessel entire, but appear rather so many wrecks and hulls, so cruelly had the Dutch mangl'd us."



could never have been brought on the two following days after the disadvantages of the first, and he believed no other nation was capable of it but ours" (Temple's "Observations upon the United Provinces of the Netherlands").

The two things that will be remembered longest in connection with this fight are de Ruyter and the English sailor—the greatness and the simplicity of the first, and the enduring courage and devotion of the second. The sound of those drums beating and trumpets braying, as the battered wrecks were pushed again through the waters to their last charge, still thrills the heart with pathos of that scene—across the centuries—whenever the story of the four days' fight is told.

De Ruyter did not pursue the English on the 15th of June, because the condition of his ships did not permit. He therefore returned at once to Wielingen, near Ostend, and received forthwith the praises of the States General, who however expressed the wish that some of the fleet should have kept the sea. The victory was, however, not so complete as to allow of that. Probably a somewhat exaggerated idea of its importance had been created. The States of



Zealand entertained their heroes at dinner the second day after their return. The Grand Pensionary de Witt attended on de Ruyter, and with the help of his officers compiled a report for the States General.\*

Congratulations now flowed in; the Dutch ambassador to France conveyed the admiration of Louis XIV. Prince Maurice of Nassau joined the chorus of praise. The 30th of June being ordained a day of public thanksgiving for the Netherlands, the evening was the occasion for calling together all the highest personages, national or foreign, in the country. Vondel and the other poets were set to sing the hero of the

\* De Guiche, who disliked de Witt, says (p. 270) that de Witt caused an account of the battle to be issued which was not strictly correct—he had magnified the advantage gained by the Dutch and the loss of the enemy; “he killed five or six thousand with his pen beyond the actual amount, and he burned in effect with his candle a score of ships, which were in good condition in the Thames. His emissaries confirmed this truth from the first, of which the real consequence would have been the loss of England.”

De Guiche informed the king of France of the exact state of affairs according to his views.

Side by side with this should be read Pepys' diary of this date, with the account of the rejoicings in England over Albemarle's supposed victory, and the subsequent dismay when it proved a defeat.



day. Though Vondel in his war pieces hardly bears translating, the following rough rendering may help to show the intensity of the feeling which pervaded the United Provinces after the four days' fight :—

Whither unswerving did de Ruyter bear  
His shield with noblest emblems blazoned fair,  
Of prudence and of war science,  
The eye by Heavenly hand led on,  
(Where all sides round a furnace shone),  
Upheld by God's omnipotence.  
Measure and law, the hero sets  
To the many-voiced war trumpets.  
Sounding as one, mortars and musketry  
Ruled by the harmony of song,  
Poured forth their war notes short or long,  
In the war melody over the sea.  
Hark all ye mermaids, mermen, Triton sires,  
The bass and treble chanting of the choirs  
Of Mars,\* upon the mast now swift ascending,  
That whelmed below the standard of the king,  
With the ocean's chorus jubilating,  
In the war of wood on iron grinding,  
In the ever-varying battle's chances,  
Till dwindling cease at last the old war dances.

States serene, to you be joyance  
Of this success beyond compare,  
Gained for subject people's pleasance  
And Christendom by God's blessing rare.

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\* "Mars," in the original, means the God of War, and a topmast. Hence a play on the word, quite lost in translation.



Henceforth must all your fleets be free  
On every coast, from east to west,  
While night brings day o'er land and sea—  
Thus quench this fiery waterpest,  
Hell's serpent out of British sloughs,  
While in your shadow we repose.

On a medal struck in commemoration of the fight were verses which may be translated thus—

The God of gods alone  
Makes laws for the Ocean,  
Lord of the Admirals still;  
The State's chief be upheld,  
That Britain's power had quelled.  
Who can check God's mighty will?

Meantime the repairs of the fleet were pushed as fast as possible. The States General issued, on the 3rd of July, an order to de Ruyter to meet the English fleet as early as possible, wherever it might be, and to attack it. If the French fleet were likely to join the Dutch, it would be satisfactory, providing it did not delay the execution of the first order. On the next day, de Ruyter put to sea, and two days' later, when off Schooneveldt, had under his control 75 men-of-war and frigates, and seven fireships. The wind was contrary, and it took several days to pass along the Dutch and Belgian coast to between Ostend and Nieuwport.



Pilots were wanting for the intended advance up the Thames; but it was hoped a landing might be made near the North Foreland, and 6000 to 7000 troops were taken in store ships. Arrived off the Thames, de Ruyter learnt from de Liefde and Bankert, who were sent to reconnoitre, that an English fleet of 50 warships, 16 fireships, and 15 other vessels was lying off Queensborough. The Dutch, who had evidently over calculated the damage done to the English fleet by the four days' fight, were somewhat surprised. Their project of landing at Harwich was not found feasible, and the troops were wisely sent home. A polite offer from the King of France to lend 2000 soldiers from Boulogne was declined.

At a council of war held on the 17th, several officers, who against orders had retired in the recent battle, were fined. It was decided that the English on coming out were to be allowed to pass the shallows into the open sea before being attacked. On the 29th of July it was ascertained that the English were coming, and the following day de Ruyter called his officers together, and recommended them to act loyally together, to assist one another, and to obey



orders carefully. On the morning of the 1st of August the English came out, as Brandt says, 90 strong, and the Dutch retired north of the Galloper. Next day, the wind being S.S.E., there was a violent thunderstorm. On the 3rd de Ruyter went N.N.E., and anchored; the storm continued. After some further manœuvring the English were N.E. of him. The wind changing to N., and the English having thus the weather gage, both fleets went on the same tack east. At nine in the evening both anchored, and all prepared for battle on the morrow,\* the Dutch force, after sending back some ships, contained 88 men-of-war and frigates, 19 fireships, and 10 yachts (Brandt, p. 372).

The van was commanded by Lieut.-Admiral J. Evertszoon, who had patriotically returned to the fleet after his brother's death, the rear by van Tromp, and it was forbidden, under pain of death, to leave the flags, except on the most pressing necessity. Among the admirals in de Ruyter's fleet on the 4th of August, Banckert, or Bankert, represented a Zeeland family honourably connected with Middelburg and Flushing, which in less than seventy years produced one lieut.-

\* Brandt, Lediard, 25th of July (O.S.)



admiral, one vice-admiral, and seven captains to defend their country. One of the family emigrated to New York, and the name is still honourably maintained in the United States, where it is now spelt Bancker.

The English fleet was commanded by Albemarle, now an old man (he was about 18 months younger than de Ruyter), but burning to wipe out the memory of his late defeat, who led the Red Squadron in the centre. Vice-Admiral Sir Thomas Allen commanded the van, composed of the White Squadron, the rear was led by Sir J. Smith of the Blue; the English numbers were between 80 and 89 men-of-war and frigates, and 18 or 19 fireships.

They were in the open sea some eight leagues N.N.E. from the north Foreland. The wind came from about N.N.E. The English therefore had the weather gage, but a calm ensued, and it was not till about twelve o'clock that Evertszoon's squadron came in contact with the English. When it did, it was so separated from de Ruyter in the centre, that Albemarle, whose left was to have dealt with it alone, was able to concentrate a portion of the centre upon Evertszoon and de Vries. Both of these lieut.-admirals were killed



early in the fight, but the death of the famous Evertszoon was a crushing blow. His father, four brothers, and a son had died in the service of Holland. Vice-Admiral Bankert was compelled to leave his ship, which sank soon after, and another Dutch vessel, the *Sneek*, was burnt. Another vice-admiral, Koenders, was killed about the same time, and the crew of his vessel, seized by an unreasoning panic, wore ship and left the fight, followed by some others of the same squadron. De Ruyter, with the centre somewhat scattered, had now come up, and was at once singled out by Albemarle, who as Pepys tells the tale, said (chewing of tobacco the while), "now will this fellow come and give me two broadsides, and then he shall run."

For three hours did they fight, broadside to broadside, but Albemarle and Rupert, who was with him, had to retire in that time to refit, and finally to change their wreck for a fresh ship. At last, when the van of the Dutch had disappeared, yielding to a concentration too powerful to resist longer, de Ruyter and his squadron began to retreat. His seconds, Captains Rut Maximillian, Nyhof, Hogenhoek, and Poel were all killed, his ship was fast becoming unserviceable, and van Tromp



# NORTH FORELAND

AUG. 4<sup>TH</sup> 1666

DUTCH: Orange

ENGLISH: Blue

Wind N.N.E.

Allen

Albemarle

Smith

Evertszoon

De Ruyter

Van Tromp









with the rear guard was out of sight. When the fight commenced van Tromp, instead of falling into line, had remained stationary with his squadron, which was the largest of the three. He remained about three leagues to the west of the main body, until Sir J. Smith, with the Blue Squadron, the lightest of the English divisions, approached him ; when, charging into it, he sank the *Resolution* of 66 guns, and after a smart encounter found his enemy retreating. Without waiting to assist the broken van and the isolated centre, van Tromp, who was accused of bearing a severe grudge against de Ruyter for having taken the chief command out of his hands, and whose instructions were so clear as not to be misunderstood, immediately followed Smith. The Dutch historians have maintained that Smith's flight was preconcerted ; van Tromp was last seen on that day of surprises following him far off in the N.W. De Ruyter and the remnant of his fleet continued retreating all day and all night to the S.S.E. ; the soldiers who were on board helping the sailors and working the guns the next morning, when the tired gunners could scarcely be roused from their sleep by pulling their hair and their limbs as they lay on the



deck. The wind had fallen very much on the 5th, and de Ruyter, by the exercise of constant vigilance, was enabled to escape the fireships sent after him, and to avoid being boarded. The Dutch accounts say that his eight ships, all that remained with him, were chased by 22. His friend, Lieut.-Admiral van Nes, who was on one of the eight, kept close to him; but at one moment de Ruyter broke down, and exclaimed to his son-in-law, de Witte, "O God, must I be so unhappy? Out of so many thousands of bullets, isn't there one to kill me?" The common sense of his son-in-law recalled his courage, and he carried his fleet into the kindly shoals which had so often saved the Dutch ships from the English vessels.

Van Tromp, returning from his useless chase, and avoiding Albemarle, came before Wielingen on the 6th of August.

The Dutch claimed that the English loss in the battle of the 4th of August was four warships. This is denied by the English, who admit only one man-of-war and some fireships, while they claim the Dutch loss in sunk and burnt to be 20, and in killed 4000, wounded 3000 men. One thing is certain, England had



regained the command of the sea, and profited by it in a degree not attained by the Dutch after the four days' fight. The English fleet at once passed along the coast, "taking ships at the mouths of the harbours," and stopping trade. In de Ruyter's grief at the loss of the battle, he was consoled by the resolution of the States General expressing their sense of his own valour and conduct. The King of France hastened to praise his retreat. Punishments were awarded to certain persons for misconduct, and repairs were rapidly pushed forward. De Ruyter's ship, the *Seven Provinces*, was lying off Flushing, when his youngest daughter Anne, a child of eleven, who had apparently come to see him, died there. De Ruyter had now the unpleasant task of reporting the conduct of van Tromp to the States General, in consequence of which van Tromp was deprived of his rank of lieut.-admiral, and retired.

Shortly before this was done, Holmes the free-booter, now Sir Robert Holmes, in command of nine frigates, five fireships, and seven ketches, arrived off the coast, August the 20th,\* and attempted to land at the Vlie, but was prevented by a storm; he burnt the greater part of 200

\* Brandt. Lediard says August 8th (O.S).



ships there. At the island of Schelling, however, he landed "11 companies, and, seeing no other way of destroying the magazines, they laid the town of Brandaries in ashes, 600 or 700 houses being consumed." The loss to the Dutch in ships and goods was estimated by them at 12,000,000 florins—about £1,100,000. As Admiral Colomb remarks in his "Naval Warfare," this amount approximated to the revenue of England at that day, which was £1,500,000, and, as the present revenue is about £100,000,000, it would proportionately be valued at over £66,000,000 to-day. Twelve or fourteen prizes were taken on the coast.

Meanwhile Louis XIV. had sent de Ruyter his portrait set in diamonds, with the order of St. Michael, and fresh arrangements were made for a junction between the Dutch and French fleets. By the beginning of September, the fleet had been again put in order. Ninety-nine ships of war and frigates, and 26 to 27 fireships put to sea under de Ruyter, to search for the English. They were found lying off Harwich to the number, Brandt says, of 90 sail. The next day they followed. De Ruyter desired to get them away from their coast, but the Dutch account says they declined his challenge to fight in the Straits of



Dover. The English fleet was in an incomplete state, as Pepys says, October 7, etc. The English accounts say they tried to induce the Dutch to fight but could not. The Dutch fleet sailed down the Channel, and anchored off Etaples, near Boulogne. While directing the training of a gun on an English fireship, a lighted piece of fuse was blown into de Ruyter's throat, causing him considerable pain, and brought on a violent fever, which compelled him to take to bed for some time (Brandt and de Guiche). It was decided by his council to sail northward again, when a French envoy, the Comte de Feuillades, arrived on board, and requested, from his king, that the Dutch would go as far as Brest and there meet the French fleet from La Rochelle. A messenger was sent to notify their High Mightinesses, that it was proposed to bring the fleet north. It seems just possible that the English fleet had prevented the junction of the Dutch and French.

The illness which prevailed among officers and men was still on the increase. There were as many as 2500 down with various complaints.

A severe gale, on the 19th of September, struck the fleet from the west, doing great damage to many of the ships, and the French, not having



joined by the date anticipated, the Dutch came north to between Ostend and Blankenberg, and awaited instructions from the States General. The confusion which reigned in the English command, owing to the great fire of London, was the cause of instructions being given to continue at sea. Another tempest wrought them some further damage, and de Ruyter, whose fever continued to weaken him, asked to be allowed to land. Then it was that their High Mightinesses resolved to send three commissioners to assist the admiral in all questions of national policy, and in cases where he would be otherwise compelled to refer home for instructions. Johan de Witt, the Grand Pensionary, being the only commissioner ready, at once joined the fleet. De Ruyter's illness continued to weaken his constitution, and he was sent home, arriving in Amsterdam on the 5th of October. He found his home full of illness. Not till two months later, on Sunday the 5th of December, was he able to leave his house. His first visit was to church, where he returned thanks for his recovery.

The news of his convalescence was the signal for sending him handsome presents from all parts of the United Provinces.



His portrait was hung in the council chamber of the admiralty of the north quarter.

War was impossible in the winter ; but, though the English king was to send ambassadors to treat for peace at Breda, it was resolved that 72 men-of-war should be equipped for the spring, of which half should be ships of 60 to 80 guns, and capable of carrying 300 to 500 men (Brandt, p. 400). The necessary complement of small vessels was also to be provided, and besides, 18 men-of-war were to be kept at all times in a perfect state of preparation in the ports.

De Ruyter was again duly appointed to command in chief on the 29th of March.

It was well known in Holland, as Brandt admits, that the preparations for war in England were on a very small scale, but he withholds the correct reason, which was as well known in Holland as in London. Brandt refers to the fire of London as having enervated the English, and to the court of France having made Charles II.'s mother believe the Dutch would only provide enough vessels to defend their coasts. Charles had, indeed, spent so much money on court favourites, that the nation's purse-strings were drawn very tightly in 1667, and he was, it is said,



persuaded by the Lord Chancellor (Clarendon), the Lord Treasurer (Southampton), the Duke of Albermarle and others, to lay up the first and second-class ships for the year.\*

This decision was known at the beginning of March. Pepys' diary says, under date March the 6th—

“The Duke of York did acquaint us (and the king did the like also, afterwards coming in) with his resolution of altering the manner of the war this year; that is, we shall keep what fleet we have abroad in several squadrons; so that now all is come out, but we are to keep it as close as we can. . . . Great preparations there are to fortify Sheerensse and the yard at Portsmouth . . . we have some fear of invasion: and the Duke of York himself did declare his expectation of the enemy's blocking us up here in the River,” etc.

When the Duke of York inspected the fortifications at Sheerness about the middle of March, the *Haarlem Gazette* announced it in a few days (Pepys, March 24). In the instructions given by the States General, it is stated that the English would *not have a force sufficient to resist them*

\* Evelyn says (p. 331), edit. F. Warne & Co., that Sir William Coventry was principally responsible for this decision.



*on the sea*, and therefore they wish to undertake an enterprise against their ports.\*

The Swedish ambassadors acting as mediators arrived in Holland on the 20th of May. De Ruyter put to sea on the 6th of June from the Texel. He directed his course down the coast, collecting the ships as he went. Off Schooneveldt, on the 13th, his fleet amounted to 71 men-of-war and frigates (Brandt). He divided his force into three squadrons. The first was commanded by himself, the second by Lieut.-Admiral van Nes, the third by Lieut.-Admirals van Gent and Meppel.

The plan adopted was to send 17 of the lightest men-of-war and frigates, with five yachts, galiots and long boats up the Thames to take some 10 frigates and 20 ships engaged in the Barbadoes trade, which were lying between Gravesend and Thames Haven. This matter was entrusted to van Gent, who had 1000 troops given him, and was accompanied by Burgomaster de Witt, brother of the Grand Pensionary.

Preparations were made at the same time to explore the Medway, taking soundings as far as Rochester, and for examining the fort. Van Gent accordingly made a dash up the Thames

\* Brandt, pp. 108, 109; Looman, pp. 232, 233.



on the 19th of June, but missed his intended prizes, which slipped up the river before him. He anchored for the night midway between the mouth of the Thames and Gravesend, and acting on the old Dutch proverb, "It is useless to fill up the well when the calf is drowned," he came down without delay next morning.\*

The fort at Sheerness was now bombarded for an hour and a quarter, and 800 troops were landed, when the Dutch tri-colour triumphantly replaced the English flag. Fifteen cannon, a great number of masts, yards, and munitions of war were found in the fort, which was now destroyed. It is estimated that the loss of materiel to England was about 400,000 livres (Life of C. van Tromp).

Vessels were now sent up the Medway to reconnoitre, but sailors were forbidden to land. De Ruyter with the remainder of the fleet soon arrived. The belated Fries division having been brought up by Lieut.-Admiral Ayala; de Witt, who had preceded de Ruyter, and had advanced as far as Chatham, sent for him to come up. This he immediately did, and in a rowing boat went to the front of his vessels. There he saw the four

\* Lediard, July 10th.



fireships which the English had sunk in the stream, the six men-of-war near Upnor Castle, and the great chain fastened across the Medway. He could not know what a state of confusion the defence was in, owing to the negligence of the Admiralty, as Albemarle who had just been sent down reported—the ships sunk in places where they were useless, others not taken away which could have been saved, the absence of gunners and workmen. The cannonade had been briskly carried on before de Ruyter arrived, and now Captain van Braakel, who was under arrest for having landed his sailors against orders, asked to be allowed to force his way up the river. Permission being given, he burst through the surrounding hulks, and, reserving his fire till close up to the *Jonathan* frigate, he made himself master of it immediately. He was closely followed by van Rhyn, who snapped the chain and captured the *Matthias*, which he at once burnt. The *Charles V.* was next destroyed, and then occurred the one act of heroic patriotism which is associated with the English part of that day's struggle. When all his men had left the burning vessel, Captain Douglas was seen alone, calmly remaining among the flames of his command. Asked



to come off, he answered that his family never left the place of duty, and was consumed with the ship.

The famous *Royal Charles* of 82 guns, deserted by the small portion of her crew left on board, was taken, and the *Fort van Hooningen* burnt. The next day, June 23rd, it was decided to pass Upnor Castle and burn the large vessels which lay above it. Five fireships which had been sent for arrived at nine in the morning. They were taken up to the castle, on which the Dutch opened a hot fire, and were thence directed against the doomed warships. De Ruyter and de Witt, with boyish daring, jumped into a rowing-boat and directed the proceedings. The *St. James*, 82 guns, *Royal Oak*, 76, *Loyal London*, 90, the pick of the British navy,\* were all

\* "Evelyn's Diary" (edit. F. Warne and Co., p. 330), 28th June: "I went to Chatham, and thence to view not only what mischiefe the Dutch had don, but how triumphantly their whole fleete lay in the Thames, all from the North Foreland, Margate, even to the buoy of the Nore, a dreadfull spectacle as ever Englishmen saw, and a dishonour never to be wiped off! Those who advised his Majesty to prepare no fleete this spring, deserv'd I know what, but——"

"Here in the river off Chatham, just before the towne lay the carkass of the *London* (now the third time burnt), the *Royal Oake*, the *James*, etc., yet smoking; and now,



consumed. The *Monmouth*, which lay near them, escaped up stream. This blow to the naval supremacy of England cost only 50 lives to her enemies.

But for the arrival of Monk, the disaster would have extended still further. His historian (J. Corbet) says with pride that he "saved the dockyard and two-thirds of the fleet. . . . They (the Dutch) now found to their cost that they had no longer the Board of Admiralty to deal with."

De Ruyter's coup had succeeded as far as the destruction of the men-of-war was concerned, probably beyond his expectations, but otherwise when the mischief was done, we were making trifling forts on the brink of the River.

Page 331, 29th July: "I went to Gravesend, the Dutch fleet still at anchor before the river, where I saw five of his Majesty's men-of-war encounter above 20 of the Dutch in the bottom of the Hope, chaceing them with many broadsides given and returning to the buoy of the Nore, where the body of their fleet lay, which lasted till about midnight. One of their ships was fired upon by themselves, she being run on ground. Having seen this bold action and their braving us so far up the river, I went home the next day, not without indignation at our negligence and the nation's reproach. 'Tis well known who of the Commissioners of the Treasury gave advice that the charge of setting for the fleet this year might be spared, Sir W. C. (Will Coventrie) by name."



he must have known fully beforehand that the mouths of the Thames and the Medway lay open to him. London was indeed in a tremor when the Dutch cannon was so distinctly heard in the two rivers, but it cannot be too clearly stated, in the face of the modern very general assumption abroad to the contrary, that the *blockade*, with many of its concomitant evils, was *fully expected*.

Another fact which it is equally the duty of the historian to lay stress upon, is the excellent conduct of the Dutch soldier on English ground, when the barbarities of our treatment of the Dutch at the Vlie, under the malign influence of Holmes, were so fresh in the memory of every Hollander.

It is well for us to remember, in our national jubilation over nineteenth-century humanity, that the sensibility of the Dutch commander, and the discipline of his commonest soldier, was such in 1667, that the Kentish villagers could only regret that the invasion was over, when within the same month the English soldier, passing through the same districts, plundered them to his heart's content, and left a terrible memory in the path he traversed.



“Pepys’ Diary” (edit. W. W. Gibbings, p. 411), June 30th :  
 . . . “Thence by barge, it raining hard, down to the  
 chaine, and in our way did see the sad wrackes of the poor  
*Royall Oake, James, and London*, and several other of our  
 ships by us sunk, and several of the enemy’s, whereof three  
 men-of-war that they could not get off, and so burned.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

“So to the chaine, and there saw it fast at the end on  
 Upner side of the River, very fast, and borne up upon the  
 several stages across the River; and where it is broke nobody  
 can tell me. . . . Caused the link to be measured, and it was  
 six inches and one-fourth in circumference. It seems very  
 remarkable to me and of great honour to the Dutch, that those  
 of them that did go on shore to Gillingham, though they  
 went in fear of their lives, and were some of them killed,  
 and notwithstanding their provocation at Scelling, yet killed  
 none of our people nor plundered their houses, but did take  
 some things of easy carriage and left the rest, and not a house  
 burned; and which is to our eternal disgrace, that what my  
 Lord Douglas’s men, who came after them, found there, they  
 plundered and took all away; and the watermen that carried  
 us did further tell us, that our own soldiers are far more  
 terrible to those people of the country towns than the Dutch  
 themselves.”

The actual damage done to this country by  
 the expedition, from beginning to end, beyond  
 the insult to the flag, did not compare with the  
 £1,100,000 odd lost to Holland by Holmes’s  
 descent on their coast.

The day after the destruction of the ships, the  
 Dutch went down the Medway—van Gent was



sent to the Feroe Isles—and Evertszoon, with the two prizes, the *Royal Charles* and the *Jonathan*, sailed for Holland. A descent was made on the Isle of Sheppey, but the march to Gravesend was not executed, nor was a projected excursion up the Thames in the beginning of July more successful, Bankert not getting above Gravesend. An attack on the Landguard Fort, near Harwich, was attempted, 1600 (or 1000) troops and 400 sailors being landed, and an assault delivered under cover of a brisk cannonade by Evertszoon's vessels. It failed, however, partly owing to the ships not being able to get close enough in.

The negotiations for peace had now progressed to an agreement, but the English plenipotentiaries being compelled to return to England for the king's consent to the conclusion of the arrangement, de Ruyter was instructed by the States General to continue hostilities until further notice. He accordingly divided his fleet into two separate squadrons, and came down the Channel, appearing off Dartmouth, Plymouth, etc. Early in August, van Nes entered the Thames and encountered Sir E. Spragge, with the result that he returned to the mouth of the river.

At the end of the month, de Ruyter off



Mountsbay received definite news of the ratification of the Treaty of Breda on the 24th of August, and he leisurely returned to Goree and Helvoetsluis, where he landed on the 15th of October. Throughout the Seven Provinces the rejoicings were great, and the feeling of thankfulness to de Ruyter was general and sincere. Again the poets poured forth his praises in triumphant verse, and, beyond the limits of the Republic, all Europe was ringing with his name. Vondel sings—

“Hence through the Thames, bursts Holland’s sail,  
Proudly there the Britons’ land  
By the strong iron chain is spanned.  
But what can iron chain avail,  
When the Batavian lion’s roar  
Spreads fear of death from shore to shore?  
His wrath the steel to rags doth rive,  
Towers o’erthrows along each strand,  
Ships, his glance like fiery brand  
Consumes! what hope with him to strive?”

The son of the beer-carrier of Flushing, the little cabin boy of forty-nine years back, had become one of the very greatest men of his time, and the more truly great because he retained the same simple character and tastes as in that earlier day.

He had terminated the war with a success which was comprehensible to every one, and he



had carried out its details on a principle not accepted before,\* though from his time carefully followed, viz. that a naval war is a war for the command of the sea. That command obtained, all other desirable ends must follow.

The Treaty of Breda gave to each of the contracting parties the territories abroad which they had held before the war, except that England retained New York and New Jersey. Surinam, which Holland had lost, was given back to her.† The Navigation Act was modified to allow the Dutch merchantmen to carry Dutch products, and German and Netherland merchandise to England. The salute to vessels of war only, as an act of politeness, was insisted upon. The commercial terms of the treaty of 1662 were re-established.

\* See Colomb's "Naval Warfare."

† Had Surinam remained British, it is hardly likely that we should have at this moment a Venezuelan question on our hands. A larger English settlement there, and New York Dutch, suggests that a Monroe doctrine might have emanated from South America and might at this moment be warning us off the Dutch Hudson. By the marriage in 1868 of Miss Fish, daughter of the late Hon. Hamilton Fish, Secretary of State, Washington, U.S., to Col. Samuel Nicholls Benjamin, the lineal descendants of Captain Nicholls, the conqueror of New Amsterdam, and of Governor Stuyvesant (the last Dutch Governor) were united.



It remains to deal with France. Louis, whose fleet, constantly promised, had always remained away from the scene of action, and had done nothing for the Dutch, had begun an invasion of the Spanish Netherlands. The time had not come for him to declare his intentions respecting Holland, but the state the English navy had got into was to be an opportunity for him to throw the promise of his fleet into the other scale, and, as in the recent war, to reduce it to the condition of a spectator.

Admiral Colomb, whose "Naval Warfare" has thrown such powerful light on the first and second wars, says of them—

"In both wars the English had, on the whole, the best of it, and the Dutch, on the whole, the worst of it, and things at the end of the second war remained so much as they had been at the beginning of it—the raid on the Medway and Thames being quite understood on both sides to have been deliberately courted by the English, that the third Dutch war was laid out on the same principles as the second" ("Naval Warfare," ch. iv.).

That England, after having begun and carried on this war, on the whole, in a successful manner, should then have relinquished the defence of both her commerce and her coasts, should, in fact, have



voluntarily placed herself in an *unprepared position* when in the midst of the struggle, stamps it with a feature from which all other English wars have been (by comparison with the magnitude of the mistake on this occasion) notably free.

That the primary fault rests with Charles II.\* is undoubted, for though his council, or Sir William Coventry, may have advised him not to ask the country for more money, they probably felt themselves compelled to consider that the demands which had been made time and again, for the people's money to furnish forth the pleasures of the king, had drained their resources to a dangerous extent. The object-lesson of a state of culpable unpreparedness is one which may be commended to the consideration of all who are responsible for a nation's defence at the present day.

\* The king's management of his navy recalls the sarcastic Dutch saying, "The best sailors are always those who stand on the shore."



“THE GOOD FATHER” OF THE FLEET.

DE RUYTER, released from the cares of war, now returned to his house in Amsterdam, situated in the Isle of Waals, on the banks of the Y, where he lived quietly for three years.

The appearance of his home and the style of living was that of an ordinary merchant of Amsterdam. In his manner he was as modest and unpretentious now as at any time of his life, always going about on foot, and being perfectly free of access. It was thus that Temple saw de Ruyter, and he describes his clothes as similar to those of any ordinary sea captain, adding that he went with only one attendant, and never in a coach. “And, in his own house, neither was the size, building, furniture, or entertainment at all exceeding the use of every common merchant and tradesman in his town.” The account concludes with a pleasant companion picture of de Witt’s simple life. If the life of the rich Dutch



merchant of those days was a quiet, and even a solemn one,\* his home surroundings were often particularly good in certain respects, and excellent furniture, china, and silver filled the reception rooms, on the walls of which hung the great works of art of the Dutch school. At a later period in our hero's life, we are able to obtain a clearer view of his home and its contents.

De Ruyter spent much of his time in listening to the sermons of the preachers in the churches during the week, as well as on Sundays, the religious element in his character coming into prominence wherever there was opportunity.

\* Though Sir William Temple helped to smooth the way to reconciliation between England and Holland, and had a great admiration for eminent Dutchmen, he was perhaps too much influenced by the court life of his age to form a perfectly unprejudiced opinion of manners in Holland at this period, but the views of such an amiable and intelligent witness cannot fairly be omitted here. His "Observations upon the United Provinces of the Netherlands," edition 1747, says (p. 129), that it is a place where the "Earth is better than the Air, and Profit more in request than Honour; where there is more Sense than Wit, more Good-nature than Good-humour, and more Wealth than Pleasure; Where a Man would chuse rather to travel than live, shall find more Things to observe than desire, and more Persons to esteem than to love." Page 143, he says, "more Shipping belongs to them than there does to all the rest of Europe."



He would sit for hours, says Brandt, reading the Bible to his wife and a niece while they worked, or would exercise his voice in singing.

His food was of the simplest, and of the kind to which he was accustomed on his voyages. At festivals and public functions his sobriety, while it did not take from his cheerful good-fellowship, was marked at a period when licence even in Holland was not uncommon.\*

In 1668 Engel de Ruyter, only 19 years of age, was made captain under the Admiralty of Amsterdam. His frigate being sent to England, Engel was received with the greatest kindness by the Court, Charles conferring a knighthood on him in honour of his father's abilities, and Albemarle being one of the foremost to shower courtesies upon the boy-captain.

Next year it is the King of Denmark who sees his opportunity to remember de Ruyter by a request for his portrait, and in 1670 the King

\* Van Lennep, in one of his celebrated novels treating of the eighteenth century, viz. "Ferdinand Huyck" (apparently not yet translated), puts into the mouth of an old lady of high position in Amsterdam the remark, "My father used to tell me that Admiral de Ruyter, although of low origin, behaved in a perfectly well-bred manner, and was an enemy of swearing and drinking" (p. 276).



of Sweden competes with rival kings in honouring him by ennobling his stepson Captain Pauluszoon. In this last-named year the two royal rascals of England and France were again plotting against the freedom of the United Provinces, and what is now described as "tail twisting" began (the Dutch lion having two tufts to one tail, it was doubly interesting to them).

Louis, the more important of the two kings, by reason of the riches and population of his realm, and of his own higher abilities, had been frustrated in his aggressive designs on the Spanish Netherlands by the triple alliance of England, Sweden, and Holland.

At the end of the year 1670, the States General learnt that Louis and an army were to be very shortly at Dunkirk. The explanations made to their ambassador being of an unsatisfactory nature, it was resolved on the 2nd of January, 1671, to forbid the importation of French manufactures into the Seven Provinces. This preventive action was followed up by a decision to commission a large fleet during the summer under de Ruyter.

De Ruyter accordingly repaired to Helvoetsluis in May, where he received very precise instructions as to his duties as guardian of the coast.



Here the Rear-Admiral Adelaar of Denmark came to serve under him as an apprentice, by special request from his king.

The Dutch fleet was kept in readiness for an attack, and was exercised in evolutions and sham fights, by the lieut.-admiral. An international incident was soon to follow.

The English royal yacht *Merlin* passing along the coast, saluted the squadron of van Gent with several volleys, to which a reply of seven was made, and then nine. But the *Merlin* claimed that the flag should have been lowered. This was refused, owing to the vessels being on the Dutch coast. The discussion, once aroused, was not allowed to drop by the English monarch, and had already been actively carried on, when Downing was sent from England to demand satisfaction and the punishment of van Gent. The States General denied that the English demand had any justification under the existing treaty, but eventually proposed as a mark of their respect for the King of England, that their fleets should lower the flag to a single English man-of-war without their action being considered as an agreement in any way prejudicial to navigation. Downing refused to accept this proposal as being made too late.



Negotiations dragged on as it suited the convenience of the two monarchs—who had made a secret treaty in the year 1670 which entirely upset the provisions of the Triple Alliance\*—furnished Charles with a large annual subsidy, and ensured his employing a small body of troops in the service of Louis, and placing his fleet at his disposal in the war against Holland which was to follow.

A new move was made by the States General in appointing the Prince of Orange (whose power had been gradually rising) Captain-General of their land forces, a position he claimed as his hereditary right.

At de Ruyter's suggestion, the preparation of the frigates and fireships was pressed forward more speedily than the equipment of the men-of-war, and they were posted as guard-ships for the commerce on the coast. Before England enacted the farce of declaring war, the notorious Holmes was sent to attack the Smyrna fleet, as it returned up the Channel. Holmes succeeded in taking

\* Macaulay, echoing Pepys, calls the Triple Alliance "the single eminently good act performed by the Government during the interval between the Restoration and the Revolution." Essay on Sir Wm. Temple.



four ships off the Isle of Wight on the 23rd of March, and on the 7th of April war was actually declared.

Several vessels had been seized by England in her ports, and Holland responded by taking some English vessels. De Ruyter was once more appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Navy, and Cornelis de Witt was instructed to go with him as commissioner. They were to put to sea on the 27th of April at the Vlie, but contrary winds prevented them, and it was the 9th of May before they were able to sail from the Texel. Their instructions were to search for the English fleet in the Thames and elsewhere, and to destroy it; but if the English and French fleets were found united, great caution was to be exercised in attacking them. News was received of the English fleet on the 13th of May, as having been seen near the Thames.\* The Dutch were not able to sail till the next day on account of the wind. Thick fog caused them to anchor for the night, six leagues off the North Foreland, where they took an English frigate, and arrived at the conclusion that the English fleet was in the Downs. It was accordingly followed, but effected

\* For estimate of size of English navy, see Appendix IV.



a junction with the French fleet near the Isle of Wight. A tempest overtook the Dutch, and not wishing to meet the allied fleet, they sailed back past the North Foreland, receiving considerable additions. When near the Galloper sandbank, several English ships were seen off the Thames, and van Gent was sent in pursuit, but they sheltered under the guns of Sheerness. Continuing to cruise opposite the entrance to the Thames, information came to hand that the English fleet was passing between the Goodwins and Dunkirk.

De Ruyter offered battle, which was declined, and he continued cruising between Dunkirk and the North Foreland, receiving reinforcements and re-victualling. His fleet now amounted to 91 men-of-war and frigates, and 54 fireships, according to Brandt, when he received news of the English and French being off Southwold, or Solebay, between Harwich and Yarmouth, and decided to bring on an engagement. The following day, June 7th (Lediard, May 28th, O.S.), at five o'clock in the morning, he caught sight of the allied fleet anchored near the coast, in three divisions: the Blue, commanded by the Earl of Sandwich, being to the north; the Red, under



the Duke of York, in the centre, and the White, consisting of the French fleet, under d'Estrees, to the south.\* Their numbers were 65 English and 36 French men-of-war frigates, and 22 fire-ships.

The wind was blowing on the shore from about E.N.E., and de Ruyter forming his line with ships abreast, bore down upon the allies. He commanded the centre himself, van Gent had the right, and Bankert the left. Before each division in the squadrons he placed two men-of-war, with two fireships, with instructions to send in the fireships as soon as the cannonade became general. The battle began between seven and eight a.m. The allies who were taken by surprise, cut cables, and the English divisions went on the starboard tack, along the coast northward, Sandwich being one of the first to engage. The French immediately went south, and remained during the rest of the day aloof, but Bankert, with a portion of the Dutch left, cut off two of their

\* De Jonge, "Geschiedenis van het Nederlandsch Zee-wezen," vol. iii. stuk. 1, page 407, says, "Dutch: 61 warships, 14 frigates, 22 advice, 36 fire, 4484 guns, 20,738 men. English: 45 warships, 12 frigates, 16 fire, 3376 guns, 22,442 men. French: 26 warships, 4 frigates, 8 fire, 1724 guns, 10,744 men."



ships. The result of this was, that the two English squadrons had to repel the concentration of the entire Dutch fleet, with the exception of those ships required to contain the French. De Ruyter, at the first pass, brought his ship alongside of the Duke of York's vessel, and a terrific duel ensued, the consequence being, that at nine o'clock, the duke's mainmast went, and he changed his ship for the *London*. The Dutch tacked and went N.N.W., with the English getting nearer in shore, then all tacked again coming south, the English trying to get the wind. The principal concentration was on the English Red squadron, and some of Sandwich's vessels seem to have left him very early in order to assist the Duke of York. Sandwich's ship, the *Royal James*, of 100 guns, carrying 800 men, was gallantly attacked by Braakel, with a 60-gun ship and crew of 300, who grappled the big Englishman; three fireships sent against Sandwich were successively sunk by him, and his fire killed Lieut.-Admiral van Gent, but shortly after he had mastered the upper deck of Braakel, and cast him off with three English sailors on board, a fourth fireship was successful, and the *Royal James* was in a wild blaze, which defied the efforts of her



crew. Sandwich himself was drowned, leaving his boat at the last moment. His captain and his lieutenant were saved, the latter being taken on board de Ruyter's vessel, the (*Zeven Provinciën*) *Seven Provinces*. There, so great was his anxiety for the fate of the English fleet, or his sportsman-like love of seeing a hard struggle well fought out, that he asked de Ruyter to allow him to remain on deck during the rest of the day, though he knew he was risking his life in doing so.

On the poop of the *Zeven Provinciën*, stood a chair of State, on the velvet coverings of which the arms of the Netherlands were conspicuous, and here, as on a throne, Cornelis de Witt, as commissioner, represented the majesty of the States.

He was in very ill health at the time, but he remained at his post of danger during the fight, and as several of the soldiers, who in the red and yellow livery of Holland formed his body-guard, were shot down, he ordered the bodies to be thrown overboard, without any manifestation of emotion.

Owing to van Gent's death, a portion of his squadron held off, and further help was sent from the Blue squadron to the Red, where the



*Royal Catherine* was taken by the Dutch. Van Nes, however, immediately after the capture, swung loose to escape an English fireship, the Dutch boarders were overcome, and the English crew carried the *Royal Catherine* out of the fight. The wind had fallen at the commencement of the battle, and, never strong, it occasionally dropped away altogether, the ships being enveloped in the dense masses of smoke, through which the fireships, more numerous than in the other battles of this period, flared with almost equal danger to friend and foe. A large English vessel was seen in flames. Nine or ten Dutch fireships were sinking; the *Joshua*, Dutch man-of-war, sank, and another of de Ruyter's vessels, the *Staveren*, was taken. The combination of the Blue and Red Squadrons was proving very serious to the Dutch commander, who, in going south, had kept the wind, and hoped for more help from Bankert. He was very hotly engaged with Sir John Harman, and narrowly escaped the fireship sent against him in the afternoon. Greatly assisted though he was by van Nes, and again joined by van Gent's squadron, at the end of the day, the English, being again on the starboard tack, going northwards, pressed him



hard. De Ruyter, collecting his scattered ships, retired to the south.\* So ended this most vigorously contested of sea fights, of which de Ruyter said he had been in many battles, but had never seen one so terrible and so obstinately fought. Sandwich's lieutenant, when supping on the *Seven Provinces* that night, said of de Ruyter, according to Brandt, who had it from one of the officers present, "Yes, he is an admiral—an admiral, a captain, a pilot, a soldier, a sailor. This man, this hero, is all of them in one!" The Dutch claimed a victory, but as they had attacked and left the enemy in possession of the field, it seems more probable that the victory, such as it was, lay with the 65 English ships which had, when deserted by their allies, repelled all day the Hollanders' attacks, and were neither approached again that night nor the next day. The English loss was, however, four or five ships, as claimed by the Dutch, and a large number of men, while the Dutch only admitted losing three vessels.

The real strategical triumph, however, lay with de Ruyter, as Captain Mahan points out, because the allied fleets, though they followed the Dutch,

\* Colliber, whose account ("Col. Rostrata," pp. 217-224) is very interesting, says *north*.



were unable to force a landing of troops on the coast of Holland as at first intended.

The next day de Ruyter saw the English and French about three leagues north of him; they had the wind, Brandt says, and seemed to wish to avoid a combat, but he admits that at four in the afternoon of the same day, both fleets seemed ready to engage, when a fog separated them. Two hours later they were further apart again, but he says the Dutch tried to bring on a fight and failed, because the allies went off.

Next day, the enemy being out of sight, the Dutch went to their own coast as ammunition was short and the ships greatly damaged. They therefore anchored—when again the allies were seen watching them—and finally pushed on to four leagues N.N.E. of Westcappel.\* There they repaired and refitted, and a small squadron of observation was sent to watch the allies' movements. Cornelis de Witt soon after left the fleet in ill health. He found the country in a state of excitement and himself and his brother the objects of general resentment. The Grand Pensionary had indeed narrowly escaped assassination and was still suffering from a dangerous wound. Attacked

\* Or West Kapelle.



on all sides—by the King of France and the Bishops of Cologne and Munster—the armies of the Republic, outnumbered and outgeneralled, had been driven back at every point, until the overwhelming masses of their enemies already in possession of numerous fortresses and towns, had advanced as far as Utrecht and Naarden. Then, in the absence of friendly support from any quarter, the Netherlands thought of the sea, and resolved to cut the dykes and open the sluices. The friendly element from which their country had risen, on which their triumphs and their trade had equally grown, was called upon, in Holland's last resort; and over field and garden, through the low-lying villages and belting the more elevated towns, the unfettered sea rushed in, "a waste of waters uncontrolled." Freedom was to be preserved only by great sacrifices, and the threat of foreign rule was swept away as the country was concealed under the rising flood. For three days the sluices were opened, and the country remained under water for two years. But the army must be reinforced, and to do this 2000 men were taken from the navy. Among those that remained there was a scarcity of provisions. By July the 3rd the fleet at Schooneveldt



was reduced to 47 men of war, 12 frigates, and about 30 fireships. With these a watch was kept of the coast on which a descent by the Allies was feared. In the meantime the disaffection of the people in the country had been increasing, and was to end in the election of the Prince of Orange—as Stadtholder—July 3rd, 1672. De Ruyter was requested by the States General to pass along the coast, as the enemy's fleet was reported to be in sight. Cornelis de Witt was made prisoner in this month, and the Grand Pensionary wrote to ask de Ruyter to declare that the accusations, so far as they related to conduct when with the fleet, were false. De Ruyter did so, and sent a letter to the States of Holland boldly declaring his opinion of Cornelis de Witt's innocence. The fleet was soon after this taken to the Texel, and from thence its advanced galiots sailed for the mouth of the Ems. Then the States General recalled it to Schooneveldt, so great was the trepidation of the rulers of the country. At Schooneveldt, de Ruyter learned that the two de Witts who had so long and so patriotically governed the Seven Provinces—having been incarcerated in the old prison of the Hague—had on the 20th of August been dragged out and savagely



murdered by the excited populace before the eyes of the members of the States General. He did not then know that the leaders of this disgraceful act, which had thus terminated the lives of two of the noblest men in Holland, were to be afterwards protected and rewarded by the Prince of Orange. When, a month later, a personage of importance intimated to de Ruyter that his usual prudence had forsaken him in writing his famous statement of the innocence of Cornelis de Witt, he bluntly answered, "If one dare not speak the truth here, the state of things is very deplorable. As for me, I shall speak it as long as I see the light." The change which had taken place was such as to create a feeling of widespread distrust, though it was soon felt that the Government had passed into strong and patriotic hands.

The appointments made by the de Witts all over the country were cancelled, and the citizens thus turned out of office formed everywhere a party adverse to their successors. Each of these coteries naturally regarded the other with the greatest suspicion, and the most unfounded rumours were spread, and implicitly believed, in a manner resembling the *canards* of the French Revolution.



A report was circulated in Amsterdam, on the 6th of September, that de Ruyter had sold the fleet to the French. This being spread among the floating vagabonds of the city, was accepted as a fact by the ignorant and poor, and especially gained credence among the wives of those sailors who were with de Ruyter. A gathering crowd began to move in the direction of the admiral's house, every moment adding to the number. Shortly after one o'clock, a time at which merchants had returned to their homes, the screaming multitude appeared before the house, threatening to break in and rifle it. De Ruyter's wife, niece, and two female servants, were alone indoors, and, but for the arrival of a Mynheer Smit, a well-known merchant, the crowd would have forced the entrance. Smit quietly communicated with the town guard, and addressed the excited people, who were shrieking wildly that de Ruyter was to have sold the fleet for one ducat per sailor. Others said they had seen him the day before, bound hand and foot, a prisoner in the Hague. The admiral's wife thereupon produced a letter from him of that date from the fleet, saying he expected to go almost immediately in search of the enemy. Some of the rioters knew the writing,

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and the excitement, though still great, began to subside. The appearance of some musketeers created a diversion, and caused some of them to move away; and six cannon on a boat in the canal being trained on the crowd, they began to leave the front of the house, and were finally, by the assistance of cavalry, driven across the canals which surrounded the Isle of Waals. The four bridges were guarded, and the excitement entirely passed away.

De Ruyter was at Schooneveldt, at the mouth of the Scheldt. Very bad weather was experienced. The fleet was reduced by several of the vessels being laid up; but there was, none the less, a scarcity of provisions, especially among the ships of the Admiralty of Zealand.

There were constant alarms, proceeding from reports of the intention of the English fleet to make a descent on the coast. De Ruyter landed at Helvoetsluis on the 23rd of September, and went to the Hague to present his report on the conduct of the fleet. He was called back on a false alarm. The watch-fires were burning brightly at Brielle and other places on the coast. The ships at Helvoetsluis were almost deserted by their crews, and the place was very inadequately defended by



troops. Complaint was accordingly made to the States General and the Stadtholder. It was decided that six large men-of-war should now be laid up. New signals were arranged for the coast, and de Ruyter hurries from Brielle to Rotterdam to make his report to the Admiralty there. Staying a day in the Hague for a similar purpose, he journeys to Bodegrave to meet the Prince of Orange, who permits him to visit his family in Amsterdam, where he arrives on the 16th of October.

A curious incident is connected with this visit to Amsterdam. One morning, during his stay there, a man came to his house with a piece of bread and a large knife in his hand, and asked for Michiel de Ruyter. Being admitted to the hall, he called out again that he wished to see Michiel de Ruyter. The admiral, on hearing the sound, came downstairs, when his visitor endeavoured to stab him, but was cleverly stopped by the man-servant, who, with the utmost promptitude, threw a small ladder over his neck and arms, and so disconcerted him that he ran as fast as possible through the open doorway and disappeared. He was never traced. After this, proper precautions were taken for de Ruyter's protection.



The autumn and winter of 1672 were marked by renewed attempts of the French to penetrate further into the country. Their attacks on several towns, and their attempt to use the ice for their approach, failed. When Amsterdam was expecting an assault, the command of part of the militia was given to de Ruyter. The new year, 1673, began with renewed activity on both sides of the Channel. De Ruyter inspected carefully the defences of the Zuider Zee, and the Dutch admiralties actively prepared their ships.

In England, Charles obtained from Parliament a subsidy of £70,000 per month for 18 months. Prince Rupert was made Admiral of the Red, Sir Edward Spragge was given the Blue, and the Comte d'Estrees was to command the White.

De Ruyter recommended a renewal of the offers of rewards and recompenses which had proved useful in former wars, which was agreed to. A reconciliation between de Ruyter and Cornelis van Tromp was effected, and the Prince of Orange requested the former to hasten the preparations of the various admiralties. A report was, in consequence, issued, showing the condition of each admiralty. A novel scheme of attack on the English was under consideration. Eight



vessels were to be laden with stones and sunk at the entrance of the Thames, with the intention of blocking up the river. Under instructions from the Prince of Orange, de Ruyter, with 11 men-of-war, four frigates, and four fireships, put to sea on the 9th of May, and met Rear-Admiral de Haan with 16 men-of-war, eight frigates, 12 fireships, and the eight boats intended to be sunk. The united squadrons made for the entrance of the Thames, taking an English storeship on the way. Rear-Admirals van Nes and Vlug were sent on by de Ruyter to sink the stone boats. They were delayed by a thick fog, and found the entrance of the Thames guarded by a quantity of English vessels. The council of war therefore decided to recall van Nes, and the whole fleet returned to Holland. The new plan had fallen through. A general instruction and order by de Ruyter to the general officers was now issued. On the 25th of May he received information of the numbers of the allied fleets, which induced him to write, urging the Prince of Orange to expedite the completion of the crews which were still deficient in number.

A council of war was held, and a decision arrived at to attack the united fleets if they should



make a descent on the coast. By the 1st of June the fleet was under sail with the object of effecting evolutions which formed a consistent part of de Ruyter's scheme of preparation. The same day de Ruyter dined with van Tromp, whose conduct was now as friendly and as respectful as it was formerly the reverse. While they were at table, the look-out yachts signalled the appearance of the allied fleets.

The next day was too calm for the fleets to approach, and the two following days were foggy or too stormy; soundings had to be taken, and it was not until the 7th of June (Lediard says May 28th, O.S.), the anniversary of Solebay, that the English and French fleets attacked. They consisted, says Brandt, of 150 sail of all kinds,\* or about 80 to 90 large warships. The same authority says the Dutch had only 52

\* Looman (p. 340) says Allies had 140 to 150 ships, of which four carried 90 guns, and three carried 100. They had 30 to 40 fireships. He gives the same figures for the Dutch as Brandt, adding, their largest ships carried 80 guns. They had in all 18,000 men and 3000 guns. De Jonge, "*Geschiedenis van het Nederlandsch Zeewezen*," says, "Dutch: 52 warships, 12 frigates, 25 fireships, 3600 guns, 18,000 men. English: 50 to 60 warships, 24 to 30 fireships, etc. French: 27 warships, 10 fireships, etc."



warships, 12 frigates, 14 yachts, and 25 fireships.\* “*Columna Rostrata*,” however, gives the numbers of English and French as 84 men-of-war, 26 fireships; Dutch, 70 warships, besides fireships. Captain Mahan accepts in his account the following figures: Dutch, 55 ships of the line, Allies, 81, of which 54 English. The wind was blowing W.N.W. in the morning, when the Allies, who had the weather gage, sent forward 34 of the lightest frigates and 10 fireships (Brandt) with the object, as English writers explain, of drawing the Dutch out. They were immediately assailed, de Ruyter having already prepared for action and encouraged his men in a short speech, in which he told them that the arm of God would more than make good the disparity in numbers. Van Tromp, who commanded the right, was the first to engage the allied left (the White Squadron), consisting principally of French ships and led by

\* Brandt (p. 568) says that a Frenchman made prisoner at this battle told de Ruyter that the English had 60 warships, and 25 to 30 fireships; the French 30, of which the smallest had 50 guns, and 10 or 11 fireships. The allied fleets aggregated 140 sail. The English and French war vessels were mixed, the French making one division in each squadron, the English being suspicious of the French, who were expected to save their ships.



d'Estrees, and in doing so formed the Dutch van. He went north on the port tack, trying to get the wind of the enemy. The allied left was thrown into some confusion by the impetuosity of van Tromp's attack, and also by the over anxiety of the French to get at the Dutch. The fight then raged with great fury in the vans of both fleets, until two o'clock, when de Ruyter in the centre signalled, and despatched a yacht to tell van Tromp, that the centre, and the left under Bankert, neither of which had yet been engaged, would go on the opposite tack in a southerly direction. Van Tromp was accordingly to follow. De Ruyter and Bankert immediately went on the starboard tack, and were soon in the midst of the English Red division under Rupert and the Blue under Spragge. De Ruyter took his ship, the *Seven Provinces*, through the English line, and seemed about to carry everything before him, when he perceived that Bankert, having lost his fore-topmast and great foresail, was in difficulties, and his squadron out of control. He therefore took his ship into Bankert's division, re-established order, and threw the English into confusion. The latter found that de Ruyter had cut off several of their ships from the main division and gained



the wind of them. He was unable to profit by this to any extent, because it was perceived that van Tromp, who had not followed the change of tack, was left with his division to the north of the line, and was surrounded by enemies. De Ruyter and Bankert now went on the port tack again, and were soon in touch with van Tromp. The latter had already been twice compelled to change his ship, and was severely pressed. On seeing de Ruyter coming to his assistance, van Tromp, remembering his violent quarrels with him, said to those about him, "Friends, there is our good father," so de Ruyter was called in the fleet, "coming to help us. I will never abandon him, as long as I live." The arrival of the centre and left afforded the needed relief to the right, and the whole Dutch line was now enabled to go south, maintaining with success their fire on the enemy, which had not ceased since it began. The fight raged with the utmost fierceness about de Ruyter, who lost his fore topmast, and escaped very narrowly from an English fireship. Darkness at ten o'clock closed the fight. The Dutch claimed the victory, but anchored in the protection of their shoals.

Captain Mahan (p. 152) says, "The affair was



indecisive, if a battle can be called so in which an inferior force attacks a superior, inflicts an equal loss, and frustrates the main object of the enemy."

The English did not admit the loss of any warships beyond the two French which sank. They claimed that the Dutch lost one, which sank in the night, with a large number of men. The Dutch account (Brandt) made the English lose two frigates of 50 and 36 guns respectively, besides the French vessels. It is allowed that the English loss in killed and wounded was very heavy, owing to the fact that they had on board the ships an entirely unnecessary and useless body of troops, which it was intended to land in case of a successful battle. The inclusion of these troops was an error on all grounds, when the possibility of landing them was in doubt. It will be remembered that on a former occasion, viz. in July, 1666, the Dutch, when contemplating an invasion, brought their soldiers in transports, and when they found an English fleet ready to dispute a landing, wisely sent them back without delay. The next day a tempest prevented the anchorage of the Dutch vessels being changed. The allied fleet could be seen anchored two and a half leagues to the N.N.W. The Dutch counted 90 sail. The



weather being better on the 9th, the latter moved to a new anchorage further south, and were joined by three fresh vessels. De Ruyter proposed to his council of war that they should attack the enemy again, which was agreed to. He had now, by Brandt's account, 51 men-of-war, 13 frigates, 24 fireships,\* and 16 yachts.

At about half-past eleven on the 14th (Lediard says June 4th, O.S.), a week after the former fight, de Ruyter sailed out of the shallows to meet the enemy, who, however, retired as he advanced, and it was not till near four o'clock that a general engagement took place. Van Tromp led the Dutch vanguard, de Ruyter and Prince Rupert were engaged ship to ship, and the Prince was compelled to change the *Royal Charles* for another vessel, the usual fate of our admirals when, in these later wars, they attacked de Ruyter. It is supposed that the Allies, with a large number of wounded soldiers on board, were not disposed to run the risk of a close or prolonged engagement, at a distance from their shores, and without the advantages for repairs, provisions, and reinforce-

\* Looman (p. 345) agrees with these figures. He makes the Allies number 118 sail of all kinds, of which 85 warships, frigates, and fireships. De Jonge agrees with Brandt.



ment which the Dutch might have at Schooneveldt.\* They accordingly retired to their shores, leaving the victory in the hands of the Dutch. The latter claimed that they saw a vessel of the enemy's fleet burning, but whether a fireship or large vessel they could not tell. They returned to anchor at Schooneveldt.

Thus ended de Ruyter's famous defence of Holland in the Schooneveldt shallows, with the most complete success, against superior numbers.

The State of Holland now resolved to supply the fleet with munitions. The States General and the Prince of Orange sent congratulations to de Ruyter on his conduct of the campaign. Rear-Admiral de Haan was promptly sent with a squadron of observation to the mouth of the Thames. In doing this, the council of war had in view the impression upon the English navy of the belief that a fleet was ready to appear on the coast. De Haan returned on the 25th of June to report that he had learned from a Lubeck captain that 70 warships were anchored off

\* Davies, "History of Holland," vol. iii. p. 130, says, "English sailors made no concealment of reluctance to fighting longer in such a quarrel;" they spoke of the "aggrandisement of their ally," and looked on the "enemy with pity." This is practically confirmed by Brandt, p. 588.



Sheerness, and were to pick up at Tilbury Hope some 30,000 men for the purpose of landing them on the coast of Zealand, for which purpose there were 20 more vessels ready.

The Dutch fleet was now receiving reinforcements, and the deputies of the States General who visited it on the 28th of June, laid before the lieut.-admiral a scheme for a visitation of their vessels to the English coast. This was expected to intimidate the English Government, who would probably see the futility of endeavouring to make a descent on Zealand while the Dutch controlled the sea. The suggestion was accepted by the council of war, and de Ruyter took the fleet to the mouth of the Thames, appeared close to Harwich, and then, leaving a squadron under van Gelder\* at the mouth of the river, came to anchor near Westcappel. Van Gelder joined him a few days later, but had nothing to report.

The illness prevailing in the ships was seriously inconveniencing the admiralties, who were doing their utmost to supply the fleet with good sailors. The Dutch received news about this time, from their secret agents in London, that the English fleet was very short of experienced

\* De Ruyter's stepson.



sailors, that it was said on the ships that they had no wish to fight the Dutch, and that the war party would be sensibly weakened if the navy made no progress (Brandt, p. 588). Every day now brought some fresh items of news from England, more or less important, and on the 28th of July de Ruyter's look-out ships announced that the English fleet of 100 sail, had been seen coming out of the Thames, but that a calm had caused it to anchor there. De Ruyter prepared at once to receive this fleet, as he judged, from the W.N.W. wind, that it might come over direct to his anchorage. The council of war on this occasion decided, on the proposition of the lieutenant-admiral, that, in the event of an action taking place, with advantage of the weather gage, the object of the engagement should be to pierce the enemy's line, and gain the victory by a smart attack; but that if the enemy had the weather-gage, the attempt should be made to keep as close to the wind as possible, and in doing this to strike and penetrate the enemy in the middle, because it would be necessary to throw them into confusion by a prompt and vigorous attack, and by the impact of a short struggle. After the council had closed, de Ruyter sent for the captains



of his own squadron, and exhorted them to do their duty. His lieut.-admirals did the same with their captains. The next day de Ruyter put to sea, and passed to the N.W. On the evening of the 30th of July, the enemy were descried at about four leagues distance. Instructions were now given to van Tromp and Bankert to keep their squadrons as near the centre as possible, to ensure absolute unity of action. The wind being westerly on the following day, both navies went south, but the Allies did not allow an engagement to take place, and the Dutch began to suspect that the object of the enemy was to draw them away from the coast of Zealand. They therefore returned to Westcappel. The Allies now went north, passing along the coast from the mouth of the Maas (coming closer in and firing a few shots as they passed Scheveningen) to the Texel, which was reached on the 4th of August. All Holland was on the alert. The Prince of Orange wrote de Ruyter from the Hague of the movements of the enemy, and requested him to come north, but the despatch was only received on the 7th of August. The Dutch fleet immediately sailed, and was opposite Scheveningen on the following morning. There



communications passed between the council of war, the State of Holland, and the Prince of Orange, on the question of attacking the enemy or waiting for the valuable East Indian fleet, now expected to return, or, of returning to the Maas, to watch events from thence. The Prince of Orange finally came on board of de Ruyter, to the delight of the sailors, who saw Holland's two greatest leaders together. It was decided to fight. The fleet proceeded northwards on the 13th, and experienced very bad weather, but anchored on the 18th about W.N.W. of Kamperduin. There the vedettes announced that they had sighted the enemy. For want of wind de Ruyter remained anchored on the 19th. With a light east wind the Dutch went north the next morning, and were in full view of the Allies by ten o'clock. But the latter had no desire to engage that day, though they had the wind, and the Dutch accordingly tacked, and keeping to the shore, went south with them until two o'clock in the morning, when the Dutch again tacked and went to the W.N.W. The enemy about the same time went N.N.E. The wind changed to E.S.E.; and the Dutch, who were at daybreak of the 21st of August two leagues from the shore, between Kamperduin

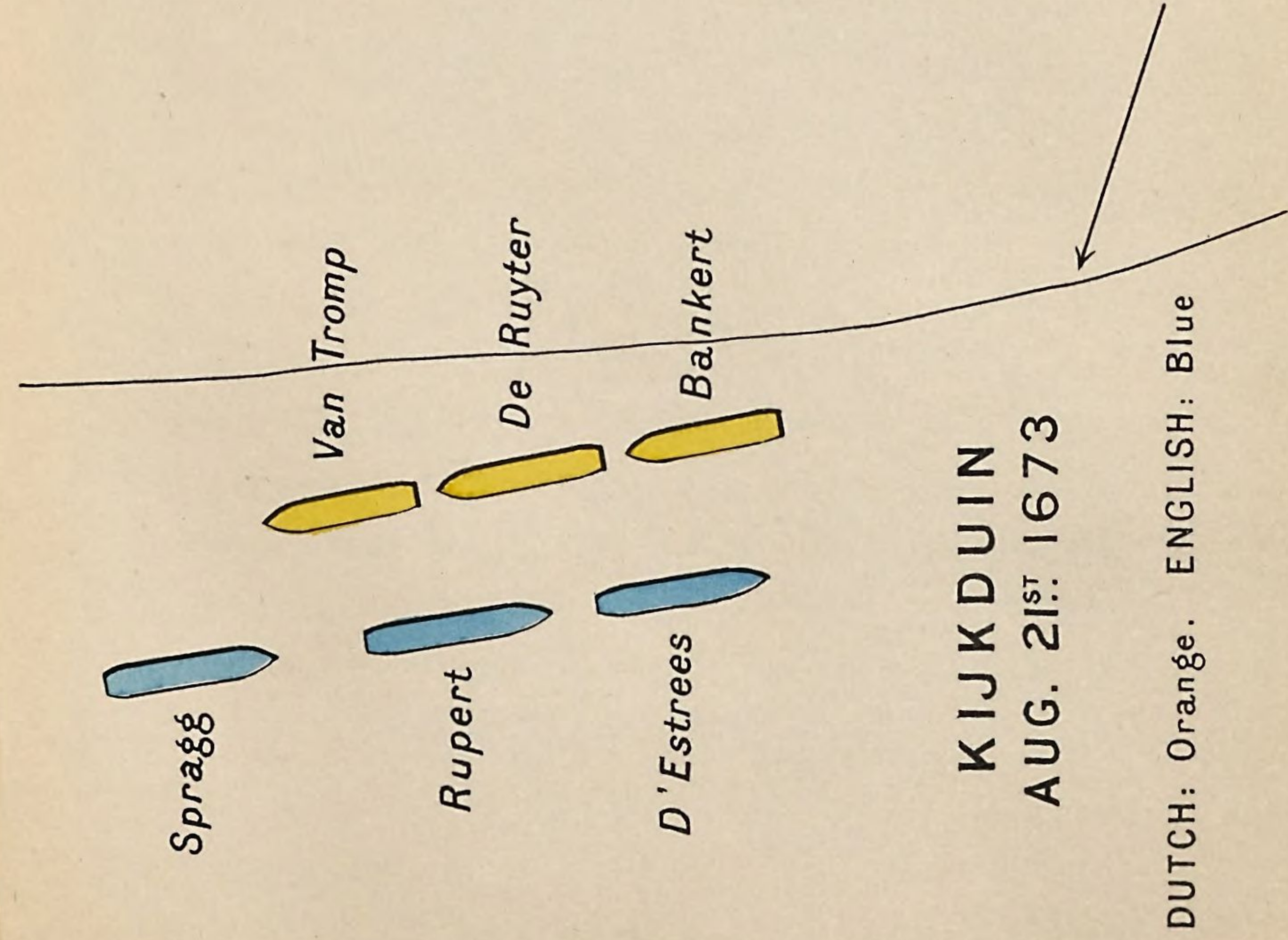
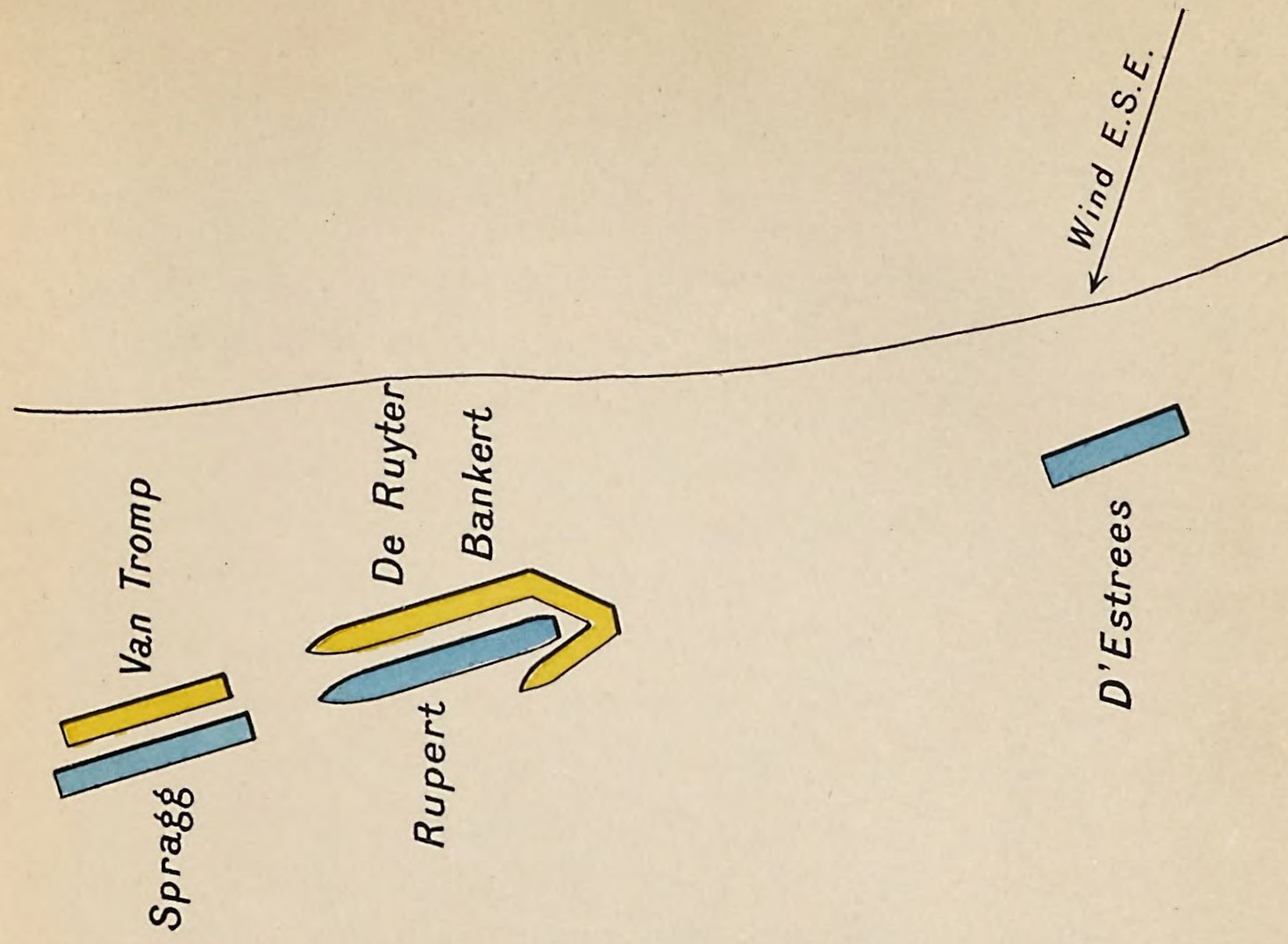


and Petten, could see that de Ruyter had gained the weather gage. Not wishing to delay the use of this advantage, the signal to form line ahead was given in the early morning. The two fleets now confronting one another consisted, the English of 60, the French of 30, and the Dutch of 70 men-of-war and frigates.\* The Allied Van (the White Squadron) was led by d'Estrees, the Red Squadron in the centre by Rupert, and the Blue by Sir Edward Spragge.† The Dutch commenced their evolutions by going north with the wind—van Tromp leading, de Ruyter in the centre, and Bankert in the rear. The Allies were coming down in a parallel line against the wind on the port tack towards them. No attempt now to evade the long-expected fight. All the sailors in de Ruyter's fleet knew, as they watched the stately line of close-hauled warships push through the waves, what defeat would mean on that August morning. War had stalked through their land. They had heard that the English king had placed on board those vessels a body of

\* De Jonge says, Dutch, 60 warships, 15 frigates, 22 fireships, 18 advice; guns, 4245; men, 19,837. He quotes Lediard for English, 60 to 62 warships; French, 28 to 30; and united fireships, 28.

† Spragg or Sprague.





KIJKDUIN  
AUG. 21<sup>ST</sup> 1673

DUTCH: Orange. ENGLISH: Blue







troops prepared to march on the Hague, the heart of Holland, the seat of government of their fatherland, whenever de Ruyter's protecting fleet should be broken up. Each rough gunner knew that the old admiral, “the good father,” looked to him that day. Holland's future hung on the issue of the fight. And now, at about half-past seven, de Ruyter signals for the fleet to go to windward on the same tack as the Allies, and the two lines are coming closer.

Bankert's squadron is now the van—and van Tromp's the rear; but the foes are still far apart. Two hours more have passed, and Bankert falls upon the last vessels of the allied van; but d'Estrees, with all but these last ships of his squadron, keeps on his course, to the surprise of the Dutch and English, and also of his own captain, Martel, who with some of the rearmost vessels of the squadron is attacked by Bankert's ships. Bankert, thus relieved of d'Estrees, is able to veer round and attack with the greater part of his vessels, Prince Rupert's Red Squadron. Thus, it has been pointed out by a great writer, he has executed Nelson's well-known tactics, and the centre and rear are as effectually cut off as they were to be at Trafalgar 132 years later. Rupert has now



come into contact with de Ruyter's centre, and here the fight rapidly assumes the fierceness of desperation. The two lines pass through one another. Now de Ruyter loses the weather, and Rupert's squadron gains it, and again de Ruyter's tactics have given it to him. While Bankert's concentration on Rupert is putting him to a disadvantage, de Ruyter, whose trained gunners (if Dutch accounts are accurate) fire their cannon as swiftly as muskets, three times to the English gunners once, is now wrapped with Rupert in a thick fog, which with a pattering rain and the clouds of smoke, obscure friend and foe, but not for a moment interrupt the musketry fire or the furious cannonade. When the fog drifts away, and only the smoke blinds the sight, the sea is strewn with spars and masts and human forms, and it is observed in the English fleet that the French allies are watching the fight in the distance, and that the rear squadron and Spragge are out of sight.

Rupert and the centre tack to join Spragge, de Ruyter tacks to find van Tromp, and Bankert follows, still closing relentlessly on the English centre.

Spragge's squadron is reached, still vigorously



cannonading van Tromp. Spragge's orders had been to keep in touch with the centre, but no sooner did van Tromp offer him battle, than he stopped the rear to fight van Tromp, whose body he had promised to bring to King Charles, alive or dead.

Ship to ship the two admirals had fought for more than three hours, before Spragge had killed a single man on van Tromp's vessel—so much had English gunnery to improve before Collingwood and Nelson could each, at Trafalgar, kill and wound 400 enemies with one discharge.

But the ships of van Tromp and Spragge are so damaged that they both change to fresh ones, and again their duel continues. Spragge again has to change, but while being rowed to a new vessel, a shot smashes the boat he is in, and he is drowned, one of the most gallant officers sacrificed in the fight.

The combat, however, rages as fiercely as before, neither side showing signs of giving way; every artifice is tried to gain advantage, but the roar of battle rings as loudly as ever. Two famous fighting admirals among the Dutch, Sweers and de Liefde, are dead, but their men fight on. Not till seven o'clock is there any sign of parting.



About that time the French fleet is seen approaching Rupert, and then, in the account adopted by Captain Mahan, "de Ruyter withdrew." The same great authority adds, "the battle . . . may be called a drawn fight."

In its consequences, the fight which de Ruyter and the Dutch made that day against considerable odds was a brilliant victory—Holland was *saved*. In that one word lies the whole result. The English fleet with its ally had been unable to overcome the Dutch resistance to the intended landing, a result in which we cannot but feel, in view of the probable consequences, sincere satisfaction, and the fleet had also been so much damaged that it was unable to keep the sea. With the first thunder of the cannon in the morning, bells were rung in the churches by the shore, and repeated far inland, where in many a humble village the Netherlands bowed their heads in prayer for the fatherland. The clouds that hovered over their country had been scattered to the winds of heaven, and the deliverer was greeted with the acclamations of the nation which had so often owed him heartfelt gratitude before. The States General, the Admiralties, the Prince of Orange, vied in expressions of praise—



Engel de Ruyter was made rear-admiral — and his father was sent to visit the coast of England ; but a tempest put an end to the voyage, and he returned to Helvoetsluis. On the 19th of February, 1674, the Treaty of Westminster was signed. Charles at last definitely broke with the ally in whom he could place no faith, pocketed the 2,000,000 guilders—which he extorted from the United Provinces, and Louis was left to face the Dutch alone.



“ADIEU FOR EVER.”

THE ATTEMPT ON THE FRENCH WEST INDIES—HOME LIFE—  
THE OPERATIONS OF 1675-76—DEATH.

WITH the conclusion of the war of 1672-73, de Ruyter's fame as a seaman again increased. His masterly conduct of the contest against the two most powerful nations in Europe, was a source of universal admiration. The bold attack at Solebay, which defeated the plan of invasion in 1672, the patient defensive strategy in the shoals of Schooneveldt, when the navy of the Netherlands had been unavoidably reduced in strength, followed as it was by two repulses inflicted on the superior fleets of the Allies, had greatly impressed his contemporaries. When to these triumphs succeeded the battle of Kykduin, and the eventual relief of Holland from all threats by sea, de Ruyter's renown passed all previous limits. While it was seen how his unremitting attention to details had shaped the Dutch navy



to the requirements of his strategy, it is possible that the deterioration which was proceeding on the other side of the Channel, and its results in assisting de Ruyter's success, may have been overlooked,\* as well as the want of the determination to combat the Dutch with the same untiring energy as in Cromwell's war.† The English nation had given Charles but very grudging assistance in his two wars. This was probably fully understood by the Prince of Orange, who felt so secure in regard to the future policy of his uncle, that he now ventured, under de Ruyter's advice, while reducing the navy, to allow the preparation of a fleet destined to attack the French Antilles. On the 27th of February, 1674, de Ruyter had taken the oath of allegiance to the Prince, and he availed of the opportunity to impress on him his views in regard to this expedition, the idea of which he had himself originated. The command of the force destined for this affair was confided to de Ruyter, while to van Tromp was entrusted an attack on the coast of France. The greatest

\* Pepys.

† See Colomb, "Naval Warfare," and Davies, "History of Holland."



secrecy was enjoined in the preparation of these bold and aggressive designs.

The Dutch fleet was now to consist of 54 ships of the line, 12 frigates, and 84 smaller ships, making 150 sail of all kinds, carrying 18,400 sailors, and about 2700 soldiers.

The cost of providing the vessels and their armament and provisions for six months, was about 5,700,000 florins (Brandt, p. 628; Looman, p. 382). Wielingen was the rendezvous arranged; but the various admiralties took some time in the preparation of their contingents, the weather was not favourable, and it was only on the 24th of May that de Ruyter was able to leave Wielingen, and even then, some of his vessels were not ready to sail. On the 27th, the fleet arrived off Dover, and the admiral saluted the fortress with 13 guns, his lieut.-admirals with 11, the vice-admirals with nine, and the rear-admirals with seven. Several English officers went on board de Ruyter, and the most friendly intercourse was observed. Despatching an urgent appeal to the Dutch naval authorities to forward the storeships with cannon and munitions of war, for want of which he was being delayed, de Ruyter passed down the English coast as far as Torbay. Thence,



on the 9th of June, he cleared with about 56 vessels (including a detachment of nine which were to rejoin later), carrying 4336 sailors, 3386 soldiers, and 1142 cannon. De Ruyter hoisted his flag on the *Zeven Provinciën*, van Ness and Bankert had commands in his fleet, but van Tromp remained with the Channel fleet destined to make an attack on the French coast. By this time, however, the secret of both expeditions was out, and along the Channel shores of France an excited look-out was maintained for van Tromp. "The nation of shopkeepers," as Louis XIV. had called the Dutch, had failed to keep pace with de Ruyter's plans. The paltering preparations of their divided and jealous admiralties, always behindhand when despatch was of the essence of the affair in hand, had worked more completely to upset all calculations than the abilities of their antagonist. De Ruyter, complaining bitterly of the inertia which had delayed him so long, steers for a point about 20 leagues west of Cape Finnisterre. Sixty-seven years of a hard life have not dimmed the courage or the endurance of the stout Zealander, and, once more on his favourite element, he is looking forward to the crowning success of an enterprise peculiarly his



own. Somewhat like our own Raleigh in his later years, he stakes his fame on a difficult and large endeavour for the benefit of his country, and finds defeat where success only was looked for.

On the 19th of June the fleet was about latitude  $34^{\circ}$  north. In three divisions (Engel de Ruyter being sent in advance to order the preparation of provisions), the Dutch sighted Madeira on the 21st, and Teneriffe on the 24th of June. Arrived in the harbour of Santa Cruz before his son got there, de Ruyter obtained some few necessaries, left sealed orders for the portion of his command which had not yet come up, and the same evening, with a north-east wind, made all sail first south and then S.S.W. Early in July (2nd Looman says, Brandt says 19th in one place), Martinique was sighted on the N.W. and St. Lucia on the S.W., and Captain Lyncourt was sent on to Martinique, as having the greatest knowledge of the island, to obtain information as to the disposition of the French forces. He ascertained that a month earlier instructions had been received from France in all the islands to prepare for the Dutch attack. The French yacht, *Hirondelle*, a few days before de Ruyter's arrival, had brought particulars of



his fleet, which, as the admiral states in his despatch, extremely surprised him.\*

The sugar fleet had left some 15 days before, on its way home, and other French merchant vessels and men-of-war had placed themselves under the guns of Fort Cul-de-sac, the most important strong place of the French in the islands, of which the proverb said, "He who is master of Cul-de-sac has all the country in his power." There were 20 guns mounted on the fort, which was garrisoned by 400 to 500 troops, and was situated in a valley and partly protected by woods. It had good ramparts, though they were not entirely finished, and high palisades, strengthened by large cane stalks, which were interlaced. The five or six war vessels in the harbour had 40 guns, which commanded the approaches to the fort. It was decided to endeavour to carry the fort by assault. There was some delay in arriving at Cul-de-sac, owing to a calm off the coast; but at eleven o'clock on the 20th of July, a landing was effected in a bay to the west of Cul-de-sac, by means of pinnaces and long boats, the water being too

\* This account is based on de Ruyter's letter to the Prince of Orange, which is given in full by Brandt, pp. 634-638.



shallow for large vessels to approach there or in the harbour. A thousand men, protected by the fire from the men-of-war (which drove the defenders from the beach), landed in three divisions, and, led by Colonel Uittenhove, advanced towards the fort, while supports were being embarked in the empty boats which they sent back. They were, however, met by a heavy fire from the fort, the harbour, and the enemy's infantry, now under cover of the woods and bushes in front of them. From the slopes of a steep mountain on the western side of the bay they also experienced a smart fire. Little progress was made, and it became evident that, even if the lower fortification were captured, the fire from the harbour would make it untenable. De Ruyter therefore drew the troops off at night. He had lost in the assault 143 men killed, and 378 wounded. Not having been able to water properly at Teneriffe, and being short of firewood, it was decided next day to pass along the coast towards the island of Dominique, in order to obtain these requirements from the natives. This was accomplished by the 23rd of July, and on the 25th a fresh council of war decided that, as all the islands were as fully prepared as



Martinique, and as mere pillage would not be worth the trouble it would give, the wisest course would be to return to Europe. The fleet accordingly cleared Dominique on July 26th, and touched at Nevis on the 28th, exchanging there some prisoners for meat and fruits, after which St. Christophers and St. Eustace were passed.

The return voyage was very slow, owing to successive calms, until the 24th of August, when in latitude  $38^{\circ}$  the fleet passed into a violent storm, which dispersed it for some days, and then early in September the wind was persistently against it. The crews suffered severely from scurvy and dysentery during the long voyage, which terminated only on the 30th of September. De Ruyter entered the port of Goree after midnight of that day, after he had seen all his other vessels pass in, and advised the prince next day of his return. He does not seem to have been depressed by the want of success of his expedition, the causes of which emanated from the want of prudence and secrecy in the Dutch admiralties, and in the procrastination and carelessness of the preparations. On the authority of his son Engel de Ruyter, Brandt says that the expedition was short of munitions, and that the unsuitable bullets



furnished proved one of the difficulties of the troops. This explains why nothing further was attempted after the assault of Cul-de-sac.

In December, two important Englishmen called at de Ruyter's house in Amsterdam. They were the British ambassador, Lord Arlington, and Lord Ossery, and the occasion for their visit was an order from Charles II., to invite de Ruyter to pay a visit of a few weeks to London. The old admiral also received a letter from Alderman Bakwell (? Bakewell), stating that the Duke of York and Prince Rupert—whom he had just seen with the king—would be delighted to see him in England. De Ruyter, however, preferred his own quiet life in Amsterdam to the gay existence of the English court, and politely declined the intended honour. His son Engel, who had been knighted by Charles, now received fresh tokens of his esteem, and van Tromp accepted the invitation extended to him, and was treated with the greatest consideration by the court and the public.

The winter of 1674, and the spring and part of the summer of 1675, were spent by de Ruyter at Amsterdam, in the house he rented in the Isle of Waals,\* and which it is generally

\* This is supposed to be the house now occupied by the Salvation Army.



admitted was the house occupied by his son Engel after his death. Engel and the three married daughters of de Ruyter were all of his children alive at this time. A niece seems to have lived with him and his wife occasionally. A close description of the interior of the house in Engel de Ruyter's time, five years after his father's death, has been preserved, thanks to a Dutch antiquarian.\*

We have no difficulty in picturing to ourselves therefrom, the square whitewashed vestibule (common to Dutch houses), from the centre of which a beautifully made model of a warship was suspended, while a number of pictures representing the sinking of a Spanish galleon, the fight of the Salamander and the five Turkish pirates off Salee, and other naval subjects, gave colour and interest to the walls.

A map of the world was also conspicuous, and the family arms carved in wood over a doorway. A cupboard for arms, at the further end of the vestibule, contained muskets, pistols, and swords captured at different times. A side room, where the marble floor was covered by a Turkey carpet,

\* N. de Roever, Keeper of the Archives, Amsterdam.  
 "Uit onze oude Amstelstad," pp. 76-85.



showed carved tables, and chairs covered with red damask, against the white damask hangings, on which various pictures were displayed, and the coloured insignia of the order of St. Michael. Dutch taste varied the inner room in colour and material, the wall-hangings were in red damask, the furniture of the same tint in velvet, while the inevitable silver and linen cupboard, of large size, had in it a plentiful supply of these articles and two silver ewers and basins. A large picture hung above the mantelpiece, and opposite to it was a portrait of de Ruyter and his family. Three valuable statues and a silver flowerpot added to the decorative aspect of the room. Among the treasures of the admiral in the same place, were the King of Denmark's medal, silver, and silver-gilt snuff-boxes and signet, large gold chains from the kings of Denmark, France, and Spain, with medals and portraits, swords with gold and coral hilts, and a cane studded with diamonds. A simply furnished ante-chamber was hung with striped silk. The "Zaal," usually the most stately of the reception rooms of old Amsterdam houses, was up a few steps, and was used in 1681 as a bedroom, exquisitely furnished by Engel de Ruyter. We are not able to form an opinion of



its appearance in his father's day. Below it was the "garden-room," used as a dining-room. On a small table lay the "States Bible," of which a chapter was read before every meal. The furniture was simple, the chairs with cushions, but uncarved, and at the end of the room a bed indicated that it was occasionally used as a guest-chamber. In the passages of the house were the house clock, linen press, and maps. On the first floor, besides the study, there were only servants' rooms.

Such was the small but tasteful home in which the admiral, now beginning to age somewhat, spent the last happy months of his life in Holland. He was now to be roused from the pleasant companionship of wife and niece, and the society of the genial and quaint old burgesses of Amsterdam,\* to face an enemy on the high seas.

\* The sneer at the "nation of shopkeepers" could not at any time fully summarize the characteristics of the Dutch. It took no note of the instincts which were developed in the art of Rembrandt, Ruysdael, and Hals, so intensely national and human, nor of the humorous common sense which gave the Dutch a claim to the second place among European nations as the originators of proverbs. Among the peculiarities of the nation, may be mentioned the cleanliness of the homes as contrasted to the malodorousness of the canals, the *windmills to draw water*, the mode of inquiring the hour by asking *how late* it is, and the facts that instead of a rear-



Spain, the original antagonist, but for some time past the firm ally of Holland in her struggle with France, was suffering from the rebellion of her subjects in Sicily. Fostered by French agents, the inhabitants of Messina had been in a state of successful revolt against their sovereign since 1673. Spain, finding that the French were gaining ground, applied in 1675 to Holland to lend her naval forces in the common cause against France in the Mediterranean, and, above all, she entreated that de Ruyter should undertake the command of the united squadrons. Spain would contribute a portion of the expenses of the expedition.

It was agreed by the States General to send 18 warships, of which there were three carrying from 70 to 76 guns, and 12 smaller vessels, including four fireships, with 1012 guns in all, and 4800 men. De Ruyter expressed the opinion that a few more heavy Dutch vessels would be more valuable than the proposed Spanish complement of 22 vessels, but his advice on this point was not followed. A councillor of one of

admiral, they had a "schout by nacht" (scout by night), and that their seat of government is not the *capital* of the country.



the admiralty colleges, having suggested to de Ruyter that his advancing age was beginning to make him lose his old courage, he replied promptly, "No, I have not begun to lose courage, I risk my life freely for the State ; but I am surprised, and regret, that their High Mightinesses should so expose the flag of the State." The meanness of the States General, and the risk run in sending so small a fleet was generally recognized. When he was urgently asked to go with the fleet, de Ruyter's answer was, "The ministers of the State must not beseech me, but bid me. If I am ordered to go with a single ship, and to carry the flag, I should not refuse. Wherever the State wishes to risk its banner, I am ready to risk my life."

He suffered about this time from toothache, colic, and gravel, so severely as to be kept in bed, and his friends then entreated him not to go to sea. His resolution was only the more decided to go. "I shall make this campaign," he said, "even if I have to be carried on board the ship."

With something of the same foresight of death that Nelson had in leaving on his last voyage to the Spanish coast, did de Ruyter leave for Cadiz. "My friend, I say adieu to you," were his words,



“and not only adieu, but adieu for ever, for I don't expect to come back. From this expedition I shall not return—I feel it.” On the 24th of July, he bade farewell to the States General, but it was some weeks before the prevalent contrary winds allowed of his leaving Helvoetsluis. On the 11th of August, 1675, in the *Eendragt*, he left the shores of Holland for the last time. The progress of the fleet was slow. Orders were sent from the States General to capture any Swedish vessels that de Ruyter might encounter, the King of Sweden having joined Louis XIV., and declared war against the United Provinces; then he was instructed to lie off Blankenberg or Dunkirk, and then again to continue on his route.

He therefore proceeded but slowly, chasing some French privateers on to the English coast as he passed. The *Ardenburg*, which was sailing very badly, was sent on by de Ruyter under an escort of five other vessels. He addressed a complaint to the Grand Pensionary on the subject of the overloading of this vessel. The fleet reached Cadiz on the 26th of September. There he received a note from the Queen Regent, requesting him at once to go with the Spanish fleet to Iviça,



there to take Don John of Austria on to Italy, without waiting for the other Spanish ships which would soon be ready to follow.

De Ruyter very politely declined to move for the present. His fore and mainmasts were damaged, and he was obliged to repair them before going further. The governor of Cadiz and the Duke of Medina Celi were extremely polite to Ruyter, who left Cadiz on the 7th of October for Alicante. There another despatch was received from the Queen of Spain, asking for five ships to be sent back to Cadiz to take the Spanish Admiral to Italy. This request was refused in a courtly letter by de Ruyter, who pushed on to Vineros, where he arrived on the 8th of November. Four vessels, which had been sent to Algiers with Captain Berkhout, now rejoined the fleet, and at Vineros, de Ruyter received a communication from Don John of Austria, natural brother of Charles II. (of Spain), informing him that a royal command had caused his departure for Madrid, and enclosing a gold chain. The young king had only mounted the throne on the 6th of November, being then about twelve years of age. De Ruyter now decided to sail for the Isle of Iviça the same day, to water



and obtain firewood, the high surf on the Spanish coast rendering this very difficult. A violent nor'easter, which raged all night, dispersed his fleet and drove him back somewhat damaged by a collision. His vessels were reunited on the 14th at Barcelona, whence he despatched a letter to the Admiralty of the Maas, complaining of the sails and cables with which his ships had been provided. In his fifty-seven years of sea life he had never seen worse sails. A number of Spanish grandees visited him at Barcelona, and he subsequently addressed a letter to the little king, in which the courtliness of his congratulations is mingled with a twice-repeated recommendation to strive for peace among the nations. The next day, the 17th of November, a letter from the Spanish king, which had crossed de Ruyter's letter, was handed to him. It requested him to wait the arrival of Don John before sailing. Much against his will the admiral complied. About this time he was suffering greatly from gravel. For three days he was in great pain; but on the 28th of November (Brandt), or according to Looman, the 18th, he received a letter from Don John, saying that he was prevented by illness from joining the fleet.



Much annoyed by the loss of time which Spanish dilatoriness had caused him, de Ruyter sailed the same day, having provisioned satisfactorily some days before. On the 3rd of December he cast anchor in the Bay of Cagliari, Sardinia.

The Spanish viceroy received him with every mark of distinction. Six of his vessels which he had sent to Genoa here joined him. A letter from the King of Spain arrived, requesting de Ruyter to go to Milazzo in Sicily, there to concert with the Marquis de Villa Franca, Viceroy of Sicily, and the Prince of Monte Sarchio, and stating that the United Provinces had agreed to an extension of six months in the time their fleet should be at the Spaniard's disposal. Captains Schey and Noyrot were now sent forward to Naples to order de Haan, who had gone there against instructions, to repair to Sicily at once; and on the 13th of December de Ruyter sailed for Milazzo, where he arrived on the 20th, to the great joy of the viceroy and his grandees.

The next day de Ruyter proposed, in his conference with the viceroy, that the navy and army should commence operations at once; but



Spanish procrastination had still to play a further part in the drama, and nothing was done for the moment.

About this time letters were received by Dominé Theodoor Westhovius, the chaplain of the Dutch flagship, from Naples, written on behalf of certain Protestant clergymen from Hungary, who were paying the penalty of their religion, by doing forced labour in convicts' dress in the galleys at Naples.

Forty-one of these pastors of the Reformed and Lutheran Churches, had been maliciously accused of intriguing against the Emperor of Austria. Summoned to answer these charges, they appeared before the Assembly at Presburg, in 1674. There it had been found impossible to prove anything against them, and though the charges were not withdrawn, they were, for purely religious reasons, handed over as slaves to the army, and the greater part of them were taken to Naples. The treatment they received from the first was so cruel, that six of the number were unable to get to Naples; two more died from the blows and ill-treatment they received; three escaped. Three more died in July, 1675, so that on the 5th of September there were only



27 left, of whom three were taken to Sicily. These facts were fully substantiated by evidence which was furnished by the States General later on. No task could have been more congenial to de Ruyter than the liberation of these unhappy men, and it doubtless derived additional zest for him in the fact that he was at the moment in the service of a Catholic king, endeavouring to reimpose the galling despotism of Spain on her Italian subjects in Sicily.

De Ruyter at once applied to the Marquis of Villa Franca, and caused him to write the Viceroy of Naples respecting the release of the prisoners. In addition he wrote himself. He also sent Westhovius to search for the three clergymen who had been sent to the galleys in Sicily. They had, however, been successfully hidden, and could not for the time be found.

On the 22nd of December, Vice-Admiral de Haan arrived at Palermo, where he allowed himself to be delayed several days by the Prince of Monte Sarchio, who appears to have been more anxious to remain at Palermo than to venture into any waters where the French might possibly be encountered. After several interchanges of notes, de Haan entered the Bay of Milazzo, 1st



of January, 1676, with seven warships and four other vessels.

De Ruyter had meanwhile been sending out, in accordance with his custom, small squadrons of observation, to keep him fully informed of the movements of the French.

With de Haan came further correspondence from the Hungarian clergymen, further evidence and instructions from the States General to de Ruyter to make incessant and most strenuous exertions to obtain their liberty.

The Sicilian viceroy was immediately requested to write again to the Viceroy of Naples, and de Ruyter made known his intention of taking the reunited Dutch fleet through the Straits of Messina to cruise in search of the French on the south coast of Sicily.

The Spanish ships were said to be still unready to sail, but de Ruyter put to sea. On the 4th of January he was cruising between the Isle of Stromboli and Messina, when he learnt from a passing felucca that a fleet of from 28 to 29 sail had been seen near the island of Alicudi on the preceding day. A despatch was received from the Viceroy of Naples stating that he had received advice from the Isle of Gorgona, off the coast of



Tuscany, to the effect that a fleet of 31 vessels, supposed to be French, had been sighted there.

In the evening of the same day, a report came from the watchers on another island that they had seen 20 vessels pass. Some Spanish vessels joined de Ruyter on the 5th of January, but a strong south-west wind drove them back to Milazzo.

In the evening, the watch-fires on the Isle of Lipari indicated to the Dutch that a fleet had been seen from there. De Ruyter now decided to go west next day to search for the French, in preference to attempting to pass Messina in such a wind as prevailed. He informed the viceroy, who replied that he had ordered his ships to reinforce the Dutch, and added that it was rumoured that the Prince of Monte Sarchio would come out of Palermo with three warships.

The next day de Ruyter went in search of the French, between the isles of Lipari and Stromboli, and as far as the island of Salina. One of his look-outs having seen about 28 sail in the north-west, at about six leagues' distance, he changed his course and went north all night, in the hope of falling in with the enemy. All vessels were ordered to keep close to the flag, but if lost in



the fog, were to rendezvous at Milazzo. The French were sighted at three leagues' distance in the north-west, at daybreak, on the 7th of January, going W.N.W. With a wind from S.S.W., de Ruyter went in pursuit, with all sails set, the Spanish vessels following his fleet.

The French were endeavouring to get as near the wind as possible. About twelve o'clock de Ruyter, with 10 of his fastest sailers, had almost come up with them, but was compelled to wait for the rest of his fleet before venturing to attack. It was near three o'clock before he was able to give the signal to form in order of battle, and by the time that the order was executed, it was evident that the winter day was too far spent to permit of an engagement being commenced without great risk. He had done his utmost to force a battle on the French, as he says in his letter quoted by Looman ; and, had they wished, they could easily have been fought that day.\*

\* Captain Mahan, "The Influence of Sea Power upon History," p. 616, says he follows the French accounts entirely in his description of the events of the 7th and 8th of January. Had he read de Ruyter's letter above referred to, he would surely not have assumed that he had intended to act merely on the defensive on the 7th of January. The figures Mahan quotes are 20 French ships of the line, and six



It was now announced to the Dutch commanders that the battle was postponed till the following day. They were summoned to the flagship, that the admiral might, as of old, imbue them with the spirit of his patriotism. Every preparation was made for the morrow. De Ruyter could not contemplate without some anxiety\* the result of the impending conflict. He took every precaution to ensure his having the weather gage, with the choice of attack in the morning. The wind increased in strength in the evening, and the Spanish vessels, on account of its severity, it is said, left him, with one exception. His own fleet consisted of 18 line of battle ships, of which the three largest carried only from 70 to 76 guns (Brandt), and the 12 next largest, only 30 to 54 guns (Looman). He had, in addition, four fireships.

The fleet now opposed to him was more powerful than he had reason to expect. Of 20 to 24 warships, the smallest was as large as de Ruyter's

fireships; and 18 Dutch warships of smaller size, four fireships, and one Spanish vessel. His account of this battle is even more than usually interesting.

The Catalogue of the Flushing Exhibition, 1894, says, "38—1676, 23 Jan. Brief van den Admiraal door zijn secretaris gesckreven. Aan idem Bericht zeeslag, 8 Jan., 1676."

\* See Brandt, p. 668.



flagship, while the guns ranged from 50 to 80 per vessel. To these were added four fireships, a galiot, and another vessel. De Ruyter placed a small vessel midway between his line and the French, with orders to fire a gun at every hour during the night, if the French kept on the same tack as the Dutch; but if they were observed to change their course, the watch-ship was to return to the Dutch fleet, firing incessantly. Unfortunately, this sentinel ship was unable to keep its place owing to the force of the wind, and had to return to the Dutch line.

All night long the veering wind gave alternate hope to either fleet; but with daylight, on the 8th, it was evident that, blowing as it then was from W.S.W., the French had the good fortune to possess the coveted weather gage. The two fleets were now between the islands of Stromboli and Salina, and de Ruyter had so placed his ships that they lay between the enemy and Messina, where the French had a flotilla, which they were anxious to join.

The battle began by the French bearing down with the W.S.W. wind in a southerly course, and in such a perfect line as to call forth the exclamation from de Ruyter that he had never seen the enemy approach in better order.



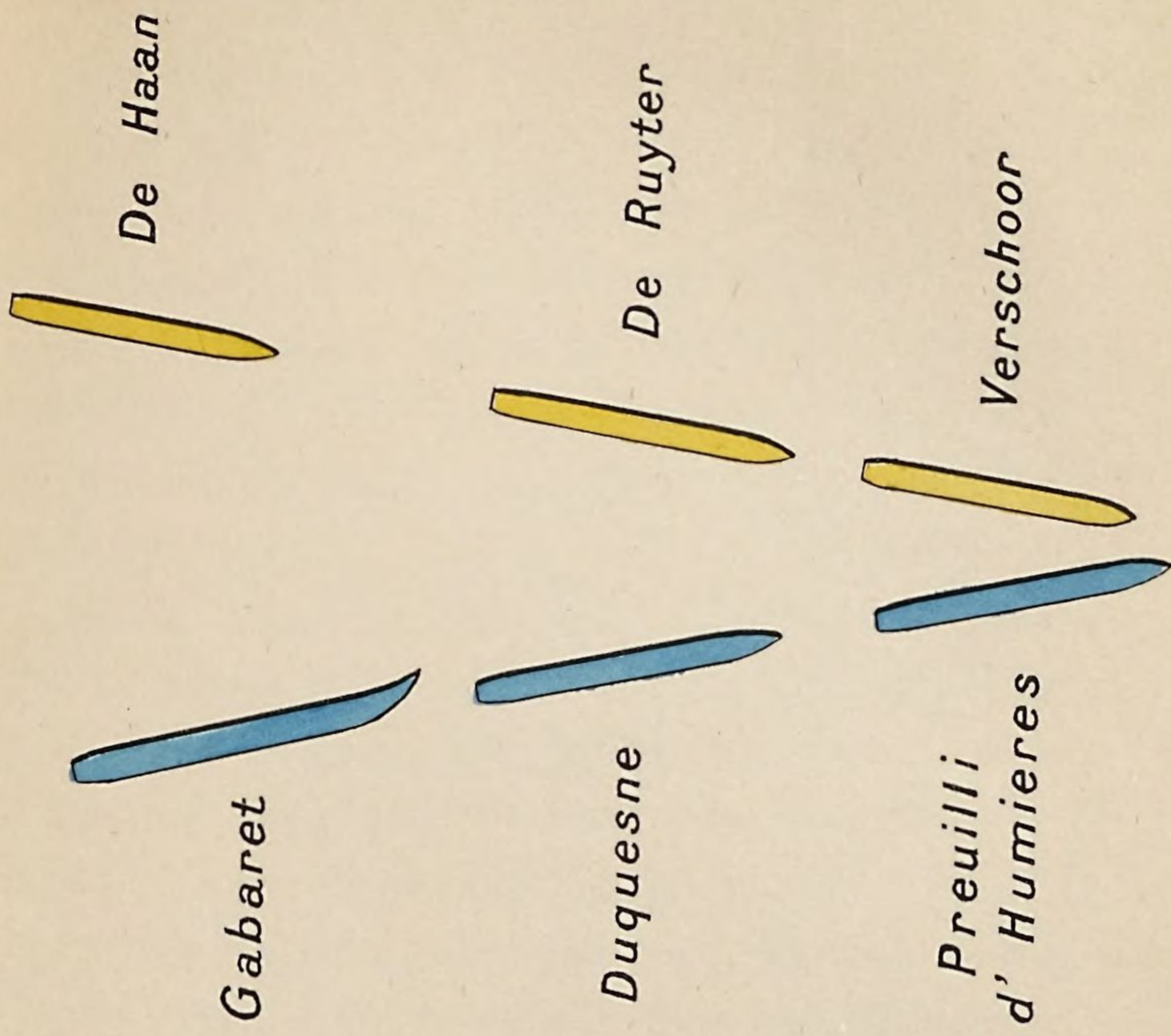
STROMBOLI

JAN. 8<sup>TH</sup> 1676

FRENCH: Blue

DUTCH: Orange

Wind W.S.W. →









He himself was getting as near the wind as possible, and the lines of the two fleets gradually converging, the respective vans came in touch about ten o'clock. The first Dutch division was led by Rear-Admiral Verschoor, the French by the Marquis Preuilli d'Humières, and friend and foe were soon closely mingled in the fire and smoke.

De Ruyter, with the Dutch centre, was soon after opposite the French commander, Admiral Duquesne. The two flagships approached one another in silence, until they were placed alongside when the Dutchman fired a broadside which was at once replied to by another from the French flagship, and then for three hours an unceasing combat was carried on between the vans and centres with such industry that de Ruyter's despatch stated he had never been in a more severe fight. We know from the memorandum which de Ruyter prepared in 1673, that the tactics he recommended for adoption in the position his fleet was in on the morning of the battle, were to try to get as near the wind as possible, and then by a resolute and swift attack endeavour to break the enemy's line at the centre. Whether he intended to try this



manœuvre on the present occasion is uncertain, but it is quite clear, that not only from the position in the line of his rear division rendering it unable to join early in the fight, but the fact that de Haan, its commander, had allowed it to be separated by some considerable interval from the centre, entirely prevented any possibility of its success. On the contrary, it seemed likely for a time that Gabaret would cut off de Haan from the Dutch centre.

Duquesne, finding that he was not making any great impression on de Ruyter, sent in successively three fireships against him, all of which were destroyed in turn without damage to the Dutch flagship, and the battle continued to rage between the two foremost divisions until half-past four, when they drew asunder. De Haan's squadron, as it was the last to begin, maintained the fight a little longer, but the closing in of the day prevented further exertions on either side. As the sun was setting the dark mass of one of the large French vessels was seen by the Dutchmen to sink beneath the waves. Both sides claimed the victory, but impartial criticism will probably suggest a drawn battle, in which the gallantry and skill of the Dutch, who had all day



resisted a larger and more efficient fleet, carrying an infinitely greater weight of metal, are most worthy to be remembered. The Dutch estimated their loss at 80 men killed and 60 wounded, of which seven were killed and 30 wounded in the flagship, and they had lost Rear-Admiral Verschoor, but no other general officer or captain was either killed or wounded. The *Essen* when being towed away next morning sank, the only boat lost by the Dutch.

The French are said to have lost 400 killed, among whom two captains. Duquesne was, with several important officers, among the wounded. As already noted, he had lost one ship. During the night preparation was made for the next day, which brought a calm, in which the fleets drifted apart. On the 10th and 11th, de Ruyter went in search of the enemy, but could not draw them into another engagement, although the French were seen to have received large reinforcements. The same day the Prince of Monte Sarchio sent to ask de Ruyter's views, now that the French fleet appeared to be 40 strong.

The Dutch council of war, held on the 12th, recommended that the French should be drawn away from their harbour at Messina into the open



sea, and there with the help of the Spaniards, and in spite of the great disparity of numbers, fought again. In the afternoon, de Ruyter and his principal officers went on board the Prince of Monte Sarchio, and a mixed council of Dutch and Spaniards was held.

The decision of the Dutch council of war was now reversed, and it was agreed that the Dutch men-of-war should cruise in the channel of Lipari, and Rasicalmo towards Milazzo.

Letters were received from the Marquis de Villa Franca a few days later, congratulating de Ruyter on his success in the battle of the 8th, and informing Monte Sarchio that he hoped the allied fleets would again attack the French. De Ruyter, however, brought his fleet to Milazzo on the 18th of January. He was still without orders as to the prolongation of the term of his service with the Spaniards, and he availed of the position of uncertainty to at once inquire what reply had been received from the Viceroy of Naples respecting the Hungarian clergymen. Villa Franca's answer was that the reply received was so favourable, that he had no doubt that they would be released. He entreated de Ruyter to remain to safeguard the interests of Spain. De Ruyter



was, notwithstanding, determined on leaving, and made all his preparations accordingly. Meantime the French fleet, though so much stronger than the Allies, had deemed it prudent to avoid another contest, and in order to reach Messina had gone westward of Trapani and Marsala, and then south of Sicily and northwards again on the eastern side, thus making the whole tour of the island. The viceroy continued his supplications verbally, and by letter, that de Ruyter would remain to protect the Spanish interests in Sicily—he offered handsome gifts to obtain his end. All was in vain, de Ruyter's time had expired, and the States General were very strict with their commanders in such cases.\*

He therefore would stay no longer, but he consented to the request to call at Naples, before leaving the Mediterranean, and cleared on the 22nd of January. Passing leisurely by the Isle of Sardinia to the little island of Gorgona, he there met the five vessels he had sent north at the end of January, and received a letter from the Prince of Orange, telling him that negotiations

\* The maintenance and provisioning of the fleet from the middle of October amounted to about 900,000 florins (Brandt and Looman).



were in progress for extending the term of his services to Spain for another six months, and that he was therefore to remain in the Mediterranean for the present.\* A letter from the Secretary of the Admiralty of Amsterdam at the same time told him that the States General had not yet requested the Admiralty of Amsterdam to send provisions to the fleet; but as the Spanish representatives in Holland had promised to ask the Viceroy of Naples to attend to this, he would doubtless do so. De Ruyter now proceeded to Naples, where he was boarded by the viceroy (Marquis de los Velez), and a retinue of nobles and gentlemen, who accosted him in Spanish stateliness with every manifestation of joy at his visit. De Ruyter was, however, thinking of a matter which he had more at heart, and after the

\* This letter was brought by Engel de Ruyter, who did not see his father on this occasion, as his orders were to convey the Smyrna fleet to Holland at once. The admiral, who was never to see his son again, wrote him an official letter which he terminated as follows: "I send you with this two half aemen (a Dutch measure) of Rhine wine, a little barrel of Dutch butter, a small barrel of English dried herring for yourself, and an Amsterdam honey-cake for little Michiel. I hope that you and the friends will enjoy them in health." "Little Michiel" was his grandson and namesake, of whom he was very fond (Looman, p. 412).



courtiers had dispersed themselves on his ship, he said to the obsequious viceroy, “Two letters have been written to your Excellency, requesting the release of the Hungarian pastors now exiled and in the galleys. It is said that their chains are lightened, but they have not received their freedom. That I again ask of your Excellency, as I do not consider that these men deserve such a punishment. Your Excellency does me the honour to welcome me with many signs of esteem and affection, at which I ought to rejoice. But I wish your Excellency to know that at present I cannot rejoice. What pleasure can I derive from all the honour done to me so long as my dear brothers, the clergymen, are in the galleys, and so ill-treated? If your Excellency wishes to do anything for me, and to show me any real affection, now professed to me, let the proof be given in releasing these unhappy men from their chains.”

The old admiral had spoken with great earnestness and emotion, and the tears came to his eyes as he finished. His listeners were all greatly touched, and had evident difficulty in restraining their feelings. The viceroy, in reply, admitted to have received the letters addressed to him, and



regretted the condition of the prisoners; but said he had not obtained the permission of the king his master to act, adding that the pastors were the prisoners of the Emperor of Austria, and it would be necessary to apply to the King of Spain for their release. As he spoke, the uncontrollable grief and disappointment of de Ruyter became more and more evident to the little group about him. The words he used are not recorded, but such was the effect produced by him on the viceroy, that he consented to take the responsibility of releasing the prisoners, on condition of their going on board the Dutch vessels and remaining out of the territories of the King of Spain.

The satisfaction of de Ruyter with this result was very warmly expressed, and Dominé Westhovius at once proceeded to the galleys, whence he returned with twenty-three pastors. Next day he found another one in the slaves' hospital, very ill, but loaded with chains, and two others were subsequently brought out of a prison.

All of the twenty-six men thus released were in a pitiable condition — haggard and worn, marked with bruises and scars, half-naked, or with clothes in rags, many of them advanced in years, and with white hair. They were marched



on board the flagship of their deliverer. When they had manifested their thankfulness to him, the admiral said to them, “You should thank God; I have only done my duty. Now, I understand that some of you are of the Reformed Church, and some are Lutherans.” They answered in the affirmative, and de Ruyter continued, “You have now found that the Papists are your enemies, and have treated you as one people, and have injured you in the same manner.” One of the Reformed Church replied, “Yes, we have been like brothers, bearing one common cross with one heart and soul, and when we received any alms or aid we used them also for the Lutherans, and they in like manner shared with us.”

De Ruyter then concluded the interview with these remarks: “Go home then, do your utmost, each of you, with your own people, that you may become one; I shall never receive more delightful thankfulness than that.”

This occurred on the 12th of February, and de Ruyter rounded the happiness of the day by landing at Naples with his general officers and captains, and thanking the viceroy for his kindness in the matter of the prisoners.

Orders were now given to provision the fleet



for 70 days, and on the 17th of February, preparations were made for sailing the next day. The viceroy came on board with a portrait of the Spanish king set in diamonds, a mark of admiration for de Ruyter. On the 19th, the fleet cleared for Palermo, where it remained cleaning and repairing from the 23rd of February till the 14th of March, when de Ruyter again put to sea in conjunction with the Spanish fleet.

The two fleets were now by agreement placed under the leadership of the Spanish vice-admiral, Don Francisco Pereira, whose 10 warships and two smaller vessels formed the centre. De Ruyter commanded the van, and de Haan the rear. They reached Milazzo on the 20th of March. On the 17th the States General had voted an increase of six large vessels (of 60 guns) for de Ruyter's contingent, provided the King of Spain agreed to pay two-thirds of the cost. The letters enclosing this resolution only arrived after de Ruyter's death. Meanwhile, at Milazzo, a council of war of the allied Dutch-Spanish fleets had decided to attack Messina by land and sea. De Ruyter's birthday was celebrated with great rejoicings on the 24th of March. Next day the Hungarians were placed on an English ship, which carried



them to Venice, whence they were taken to Amsterdam or other places, as they chose.

The fleets once more put to sea on the 26th of March, and were opposite Messina on the following day. De Ruyter speedily convinced himself of the imprudence of attempting to attack Messina from the sea, but it required a few days to bring the Spaniards over to his opinion, during which time it was seen that the Sicilian French army on shore had repulsed the Spanish troops there. Another council of war was called. It was decided unanimously not to do anything against Messina, but to ask the viceroy if the approaching French squadron from Toulon might be sought out and attacked. The weather was at this time very trying to the ships in the Bay of Messina. However, on the 6th of April, a letter from the viceroy was laid before the council, suggesting that the fleets should make for Agosta, or Augusta, on the east coast of Sicily, about 18 miles north of Syracuse, and endeavour to take it. With great difficulty, owing to the tempest which was now raging, the Dutch got their vessels into the Bay of Agosta by the 20th of April; but on the next day they were summoned to come out to meet the French fleet, which had sailed



from Messina, and was then in sight of Catania. The council of war, hurriedly called together, resolved to take the united fleets to sea at once; and by nine o'clock in the evening, with a wind from the land, they put out. At daybreak next morning, the 22nd of April, de Ruyter, being then about three leagues north of Agosta, sighted the French on the horizon to the north-west. They proved to be 30 ships of the line, three frigates, and at least seven fireships, carrying 2172 cannon and 10,665 men.\* Lieutenant-General d'Almeras led the van, Admiral Duquesne (commanding in chief) had the centre, and Vice-Admiral Gabaret the rear. The allied fleet was a motley collection of ships. De Ruyter's 17 men-of-war formed the mainstay of it; besides these, he had six snows, four fireships, and two storeships. The guns and men of the Dutch contingent amounted to 852 cannon and 4500 men. The Spanish vessels were 10 ships of the line, of which only about five were expected to be of any real service. One of them carried 70 guns and 740 men, and they had about seven galleys, which they used for towing damaged

\* Brandt and Looman. Looman says, p. 421, that five of the ships had from 90 to 100 guns.



ships out of line. Such was the constitution of the fleet to which the incompetency of the Dutch admiralties had entrusted the safety of their gallant sailors and their greatest leader.

De Ruyter, under the arrangement made when the fleet quitted Palermo, led the van, Vice-Admiral Don Francisco Pereira, the commander, led the centre, and de Haan the rear.

The two navies, making the best use of a failing wind, were not far apart, when about midday they fell into a calm, which kept them in suspense well into the afternoon. Then the welcome breeze freshened from the S.E., and de Ruyter bore down with the full strength of the wind to the last of his combats.

Like the aged Ulysses of the poet, and in the clime of Ulysses, the brave old admiral, with his comrades of many a fight before,

"not now that strength which in old days  
Moved earth and heaven . . . ;

but still

"One equal temper of heroic hearts,  
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will  
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield,"

sought out the foe.



Fastening their sails tightly against the mast, as the wind was with them, the ships of the van came crashing into d'Almeras' division at four o'clock, the mighty form of Etna spreading upwards from the Sicilian shores, a silent background of the scene. De Ruyter laid his vessel alongside of d'Almeras, and when within pistol-shot, fired his first broadside. Near him Count van Styrum in the *Lion* admirably seconded him. The French refusing to give way, the fight became very hot here; but the centre (the Spanish division) was allowed to remain to leeward, and though cannonading the French violently, was too far off to be of service to the van or of injury to the French, while it kept de Haan with the rear out of the fight for a considerable time. It was said by some of the Spaniards, afterwards, that they were afraid to advance with the small quantity of powder which they had on board. After a time the Dutch gunnery in the van was having its effect on the French vessels opposed to them, which as they retired were succeeded by others. De Ruyter was standing on the poop, giving his orders with his usual calmness about half an hour after the fight began, when a bullet struck his left foot on the



instep, carrying away a large part of the foot, breaking the two bones of the right leg about a hand's breadth above the ankle, and hurling him down some seven feet from the place where he was standing. These were the first wounds he had received from an enemy since boyhood. When picked up he was found to have a large cut on the head. When lifted in the ready arms of his men, de Ruyter's first thought was one of thankfulness at being preserved to complete the battle. “Gracious God,” he exclaimed, “I thank Thee with all my heart for having kept me through so many different dangers with such kindness, and now for visiting me in this Fatherly way. Let this punishment serve for the salvation of my soul.” He was heard praying, “Lord, take care of our country's fleet. Spare mercifully our officers, sailors, and soldiers, who for a little money have to bear so much discomfort and danger. Give them courage and strength that they may gain the victory under Thy blessing.”

Captain Callenburgh, who took the command of the *Eendraght* when de Ruyter was wounded, acted under his advice, and kept his condition a secret from the other vessels.

Some of Duquesne's ships from the centre had



already been engaged with de Ruyter's division, when Duquesne himself came with the rest of his centre, and de Ruyter sent a boat to summon the Spanish admiral to a nearer contest, adding that the approaching victory would be rendered more complete by his immediate presence. The Spaniard did accordingly approach, though not as closely as was required, but de Haan was now able to get nearer also, and to occupy the French rear.

In de Ruyter's neighbourhood the fight was for a short time as fierce as ever. The *Spiegel*, Captain Schey, was so damaged as to be towed out of battle, and the same fate befel the *Damietta*, Captain Uitterwyk. Between the firing of the broadsides, the wounded admiral called to his men, "Courage, my children, courage; that's the way to gain the victory!"

Eight French ships passed the *Eendraght*, two of them flagships, but the perfect training de Ruyter had given her crew, enabled them to fire the guns as quickly as muskets, and each of her enemies was glad to sheer off. The French had found victory impossible, they began to give ground after sunset, and now at seven o'clock they were in full flight.

By the aid of the moonlight, de Haan was able



to chase them till eight o'clock, when he was recalled, as there were indications of a coming storm.

Next morning the French could only be seen from the mastheads, far in the north, and apparently steering by Cape del Faro, towards Calabria. By de Ruyter's orders the fleet went south to Syracuse, his vessels not being in a state to face severe weather. His own main, fore, and mizen-masts were so damaged, as also his great yard-arm and his mizen-yard, that the danger of using sails would have been extreme. Seventy cannon shot had passed through his great topsail, 46 through the small topsail, and over 20 through his mizen topsail, without counting the holes made by large and small bullets. De Ruyter, in his despatch to the Prince of Orange, said the Spanish admiral had been far off under the wind, but that finally, having kept closer to the wind, he had actively cannonaded the enemy, though without much effect. Of de Haan he made no special mention. Captain Noyrot died on the 25th of April of his wound. The Dutch indeed escaped with a small number of killed and wounded, considering the severity of their engagement with the French van. The latter lost Lieutenant-General d'Almeras, and two captains



killed, had five captains wounded, and some hundreds of seamen, or soldiers. Duquesne wrote to the French king that his ships would not be in a fit state to put to sea till after the summer, on account of the large quantity of cannon shot they had received in the battle. In spite of all the disadvantages he had to contend with—bad, small ships, useless allies who insisted on dividing the Dutch squadrons—de Ruyter's last effort had been crowned with success. The physicians did not at first fear for de Ruyter's recovery. He passed the first night without changing their opinion; but the next day the dressing of his wounds gave him intense pain, which he bore with his usual patience, saying that he cared little about his miserable body, if his soul might be saved. He prayed that patience might be given him to the end, gave particular instructions for the treatment of the wounded sailors, and again turning his thoughts to his country exclaimed, "Oh, that I must lie here, and be unable to do my duty to the country." On the fourth or fifth day of his illness, a fever set in, which he failed to throw off, and which increased day by day. He set his mind now entirely on his future state, repeating portions of Scripture, and especially the



Psalms, the 6th, 8th, and 9th verses of the 42nd Psalm, and the 71st verse of Psalm 119.

When those about him spoke of his wife and family, he said his family would have increased his trouble had they been present. He hoped to see them again in joy and eternal felicity. The fever having greatly increased on the 28th of April, began to diminish at midday of the 29th, and with it the strength of de Ruyter ebbed slowly away. He was now only anxious to go quickly. He repeated the words of the 63rd Psalm, beginning, "Oh God, thou art my God," and as speech forsook him, he indicated that he wished his chaplain to pray for a happy deliverance for him. Then he quietly endured his intense pain until between nine and ten o'clock in the night, when the little group of sorrowing officers saw that the seven days' agony had passed, and the great admiral had found peace.

The body of de Ruyter, embalmed by his friends, was sent home and buried in the Nieuwe Kerk, Amsterdam, with all the honours his country could heap upon it. The heart and lungs were buried in a little island in the historic Bay of Syracuse, where the flowing and the ebbing tide roll daily round the resting-place.



No more in this world could the meanness and short-sightedness of admiralities or of allies affect him. The six additional warships might come or go. Never should he again push his prow through the foam-flecked waves, and hold his life at the bidding of the leaders of the State. Nor could the dukedom with which Spain hoped to honour a hero whose only thought was duty, reach him now.

In the career of de Ruyter, nothing is more remarkable than the fact that each upward step was gained without any striving for it on his part. In fact, in several cases, the greatness could only be thrust upon him when it had been pointed out to him that his duty to the State absolutely required his acceptance of it.

If we except the artistic instincts of the Dutch, then de Ruyter is the highest embodiment of the great characteristics of his race. A born sailor and trader, with the aptitudes of a business man, with a marked facility for acquiring languages, assisted by a memory which never deceived, he was endowed with a spirit of adventure, an equable perseverance which was not easily upset, and with the highest courage and resource in the face of danger. His genius for naval science was



such that he was, in the words of Captain Mahan, with which this volume begins, "the foremost figure, not only in the Dutch service, but among all the naval officers of that age." On the other hand, he was distinctly not a politician, and his Dutch common sense, which made him despise all empty show, led him to dislike public life, while, to balance this, obedience to duty, and his vast tolerance, made him the best of citizens. A truly Dutch love of the simple and even lowly in life (not observable, perhaps, nowadays to a casual onlooker), which led him to sweep out his cabin and tend his chickens after a great victory, with the warm heart he bore, made his home-life remarkable, even in Holland. The earnestness of his nation took with him the form of religion, and in so doing, it fed upon noble and simple thoughts, which made his life far higher than those of the patriarchs he studied; and to this it is partly owing that among the world's great fighting men, whose spirits have been touched with heroism, there are none whose lives have joined more real nobility and sweetness than that of the son of the beer-drawer of Flushing.\*

\* The de Ruyter de Wildt papers (including about 1100 letters), acquired by the Dutch Government, have now been



The land to which de Ruyter had devoted himself in life and death, calls for a word in conclusion. The signs of change in the position of Holland as a great power, and as the carrier of the world, towards the end of de Ruyter's life, had been more evident to contemporaries than they are apt to be to the reader of the brilliant exploits of her sons in those years. As the foliage of autumn, in a certain stage, resembles that of spring so closely as hardly to be distinguished from it, the *decay* of a nation's strength is not always at first distinguishable from its *growth*. The deterioration was none the less real. In this condition of things England's policy was only a single cause. France, the false friend, considered that the trade of Holland was "usurped" from other nations, and in time of peace, poured her privateers into the channel at a large annual cost to Holland. The foundations of the latter's trade were being sapped, and in 1669 and 1670 it had hardly yielded any profit. Holland's expenses were large, and though her

searched, but reveal nothing new about the admiral. The recent searches in the Archives at the Hague in connection with Venezuela have yielded nothing more with regard to him.



credit enabled her to borrow at four per cent., she was feeling the weight of her burdens more severely than ever. The bearing of the Dutch navy, in its successful defensive actions, might hide its real state, but so pinched for men had the country become even then, that the army was only to be kept up by large drafts on the navy. The very first thoughts of the Prince of Orange were how to reduce it still further. To this succeeded the parsimony in the equipment of the Mediterranean fleet, with its disastrous result. And when the indomitable prince, become King of England, diminished the Dutch fleet to 30 warships, left the mercantile marine unprotected, reduced the admirals to lower rank than English captains, and refused to admit the beautiful wares of Delft free into England,\* it was perceived that a change had come over the country and the hero who had once been willing to "die in the last ditch" for Holland, but was now looking to a more conspicuous resting-place in Westminster Abbey.

The seal was then put to Holland's destiny, and it is hardly open to doubt, that so small a nation, no matter how heroic, must have found the same termination to its glories in course of

\* Davies, "History of Holland," vol. iii. pp. 214, 216, 226.



time, given the same circumstances in its surroundings. And the same fate awaits any nation, however great or populous, which forgets that greed and envy rise refreshed every morning from the pillow on both sides of the Channel, and which, having the greatest interests in food and commerce beyond seas, refuses adequately to protect them.



## APPENDIX I.

IN the "Memorials of Admiral Sir Wm. Penn," there is reprinted "A list of the Parliament's Fleet now upon the coast of Holland, June, 1652."

|                                        | Guns. |                                        | Guns. |
|----------------------------------------|-------|----------------------------------------|-------|
| <i>Resolution</i> (Blake)              | 68    | (N.B.—Names omitted here for brevity.) |       |
| <i>James</i> (Penn V.-A.)              | 60    |                                        |       |
| <i>Andrew</i>                          | 60    |                                        | 28    |
| <i>Triumph</i>                         | 68    |                                        | 36    |
| <i>Victory</i>                         | 60    |                                        | 22    |
| <i>Rainbow</i> (Ayscue)                | 62    |                                        | 40    |
| <i>Fairfax</i> (Lawson)                | 62    |                                        | 14    |
| <i>Speaker</i>                         | 62    |                                        | 14    |
| <i>Garland</i>                         | 48    |                                        | 12    |
| (N.B.—Names omitted here for brevity.) |       |                                        | 46    |
|                                        | 42    |                                        | 46    |
|                                        | 42    |                                        | 40    |
|                                        | 42    |                                        | 42    |
|                                        | 42    |                                        | 42    |
|                                        | 40    |                                        | 42    |
|                                        | 40    |                                        | 30    |
|                                        | 40    | Merchant Ships.                        |       |
|                                        | 40    |                                        | 32    |
|                                        | 30    |                                        | 40    |
|                                        | 26    |                                        | 34    |
|                                        | 22    |                                        | 32    |
|                                        | 46    |                                        | 32    |
|                                        | 24    |                                        | 40    |
|                                        | 24    |                                        | 40    |
|                                        | 24    |                                        | 40    |



N.B.—The *Royal Sovereign* alias *Commonwealth*, 100 guns with 1400 men, being repaired.

“ A further list of names of the Parliament’s Navy for the present expedition against the Hollander.”

| Guns. | Guns. | Guns. | Guns. | Guns. | Guns. | Merchants<br>hired.<br>Guns. |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------------------------------|
| 88    | 46    | 40    | 28    | 27    | 14    | 40                           |
| 62    | 46    | 40    | 34    | 18    | 14    | 40                           |
| 60    | 40    | 40    | 34    | 18    | 14    | 36                           |
| 46    | 40    | 64    | 32    | 18    | 14    | 40                           |
| 46    | 40    | 20    | 30    | 14    | 14    | —                            |
| 42    | —     | —     | —     | —     | 14    | —                            |

N.B.—These would aggregate 81 vessels.



## APPENDIX II.

“LIFE of Henrietta, daughter of Charles I. and Duchess of Orleans,” by Mrs. H. Ady, p. 199. Charles’s letter to his sister, December 15, 1664, says: “Since my last to you we have taken many more Duch (*sic*) ships ; the truth is, hardly any escapes us that passe through the Chanell. I beleeve we have taken already above fouer score,” etc., etc. P. 202, January, 1665, same to same: “I perceive that van Benninghen does use all possible artes and trickes to make me appeare the aggressour, but if you have read over the printed paper I sent you, you will clearly finde the contrary, and that ’tis the Dutch has begun with us, which now playnly appeares by what de Rutter has done in Guinny, and I am sure there is nothing in the King of France’s treaty that obleeges him to second them if they be the attaquers.”

The above was written on the assumption, which Charles knew to be false, that de Ruyter had attacked English settlements unprovoked.

Another letter, p. 204, January 12, 1665, however became necessary, and the king says : “The Duch Ambassadeur did yesterday, in discourse with me, say that de Rutter had orders from the States to goe for Guiny, which he never acknowledged before, and I believe it came out before he thought of it. I put Holmes into the Tower for his takeing of Cape Verd without orders, . . . and that was done by a privat captaine without authority,” etc., etc.



The argument is curious here. Charles's people have been taking Dutch ships almost every day. England still retaining the Dutch West African possessions she had taken by force, and yet de Ruyter is not even allowed to regain those colonies for the Dutch!

Another letter, at p. 207, date February 27, 1665, is interesting as an exhibition of the king's Billingsgate. "You know the old saying in England, the more . . . is stirred the more it stinkes, and I do not care . . . for anything a Dutch man sayes of me, and so I thinke you have enough of this dirty subject which nothing but a stinking Dutch man could have been the cause of." And this was written by the man who had so warmly expressed his sensibility of the kindness he had received from the Dutch in his exile, and who now called himself almost the only man in his kingdom who did not desire war!



### APPENDIX III.

IN the "Memorials of Penn," p. 318, the details of Wassenaar's fleet, May 23, 1665, are given from "Description Exacte des Guerres, etc., Amsterdam, 1668." They may be epitomized as follows:—

| 1ST SQUADRON.                     |       |      | 2ND SQUADRON.                     |       |      |
|-----------------------------------|-------|------|-----------------------------------|-------|------|
| Opdam (Wassenaar).                |       |      | J. Evertszoon.                    |       |      |
|                                   | Guns. | Men. |                                   | Guns. | Men. |
| Flagship <i>Concord</i>           | 84    | 500  | (N.B.—Names omitted for brevity.) | 78    | 300  |
|                                   | (?)   | (?)  |                                   | 52    | 204  |
| (N.B.—Names omitted for brevity.) | 62    | 260  |                                   | (?)   | (?)  |
|                                   | 78    | 450  |                                   | 75    | 450  |
|                                   | 62    | 250  |                                   | 50    | 250  |
|                                   | 60    | 250  |                                   | 44    | 200  |
|                                   | 56    | 230  |                                   | 44    | 200  |
|                                   | 56    | 230  |                                   | 44    | 200  |
|                                   | (?)   | (?)  |                                   | 38    | 180  |
|                                   | 46    | 220  |                                   | 32    | 130  |
|                                   | 48    | 210  |                                   | (?)   | (?)  |
|                                   | 48    | 200  |                                   | (?)   | (?)  |
|                                   | 40    | 180  |                                   | 20    | 131  |
|                                   | 38    | 160  |                                   | 24    | 125  |
|                                   | 18    | 80   |                                   |       |      |



## 3RD SQUADRON.

Cortenaar.

|          | Guns. | Men. |
|----------|-------|------|
| 15 Ships | 794   | 3665 |

## 4TH SQUADRON.

Stellingwerf.

|           | Guns. | Men. |
|-----------|-------|------|
| 15 Ships* | 590   | 2801 |

\* Guns not given of three  
of these.

## 5TH SQUADRON.

Cornelis van Tromp.

|           | Guns. | Men. |
|-----------|-------|------|
| 17 Ships* | 774   | 3216 |

\* Guns and men of one  
ship not given.

## 6TH SQUADRON.

C. Evertszoon.

|           | Guns. | Men. |
|-----------|-------|------|
| 18 Ships* | 374   | 1720 |

\* Guns and men of seven  
ships not given.

## 7TH SQUADRON.

Schram.

|           | Guns. | Men. |
|-----------|-------|------|
| 16 Ships* | 693   | 3273 |

\* Guns and men of one  
ship not given.

## 8TH SQUADRON.

Not in the Battle.

|          | Guns. | Men. |
|----------|-------|------|
| 9 Ships* | 258   | 1093 |

\* Guns and men of two  
ships not given.



## APPENDIX IV.

A VERY curious work, "Angliae Notitia, or, the Present State of England," by Chamberlayne, "1671-1673," etc., gives the following list of British warships forming the navy in 1671. The names of most of the ships, and the number of men carried, are omitted in most cases in this extract for the sake of brevity.

### FIRST-RATES.

|                  | Men. | Guns. |
|------------------|------|-------|
| <i>Charles</i>   | 550  | 80    |
| <i>Prince</i>    | 600  | 84    |
| <i>Sovereign</i> | 700  | 100   |

### SECOND-RATES.

| Men. | Guns. | Men.               | Guns.  |
|------|-------|--------------------|--------|
| 300  | 56    | 340                | 60     |
| 300  | 56    | 350                | 64     |
| 380  | 64    | (?)                | 76     |
| 350  | 60    | 320                | 56     |
| 500  | 64    | 320                | 56     |
| 500  | 70    | 320                | 50     |
| 340  | 56    | <i>St. Michael</i> | (?)(?) |

### THIRD-RATES.

| Men. | Guns. | Guns. | Guns. |
|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 240  | 54    | 50    | 50    |
| 240  | 52    | 52    | 52    |
| 230  | 48    | 48    | 52    |

### THIRD-RATES—continued.

| Men. | Guns. | Guns. | Guns.             |
|------|-------|-------|-------------------|
| (?)  | (?)   | 56    | 52                |
| 230  | 48    | 50    | <i>Rupert</i> (?) |
|      | 52    | 52    |                   |

### FOURTH-RATES.

| Guns. | Guns. | Guns. | Guns. |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 40    | 32    | 40    | 38    |
| 40    | 38    | 40    | 38    |
| 40    | 40    | 40    | 30    |
| 24    | 40    | 44    | 40    |
| 30    | 38    | 44    | 40    |
| 32    | 38    | 40    | 40    |
| 44    | 36    | 32    | 38    |
| 36    | 30    | 44    | 38    |
| 40    | 40    | 34    | 38    |
| 40    | 30    | 40    | 44    |
| 40    | 44    | 36    |       |
| 40    | 38    | 38    |       |



| FIFTH-RATES. |                  |       |       | SIXTH-RATES. |       |       |       |
|--------------|------------------|-------|-------|--------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Guns.        | Guns.            | Guns. | Guns. | Guns.        | Guns. | Guns. | Guns. |
| 26           | 20               | 22    | 22    | 14           | 14    | 10    |       |
| 18           | 26               | 22    | 24    | 12           | 10    | 10    | 8     |
| 24           | 20               | 22    | 24    | 12           | 12    | 6     | 6     |
| 26           | 22               | 22    | 20    | 10           | 12    | 12    | 12    |
| 20           | 26               | 22    | 22    | 8            | 8     | 12    | 6     |
| 22           | 20               | 22    | 34    | 6            | 8     | (?)   | 12    |
| 14           | 20               | 22    | 26    | 12           | 6     | 8     | 12    |
| 22           | <i>Hound</i> (?) | 22    | 26    | 4            | 6     | (?)   | 11    |
| 32           | 16               | 22    | 26    | (?)          | 6     | 12    | 16    |
|              |                  |       |       | 8            |       |       |       |

In 1673-74 four new first-rates were built, viz. *Royal James*, *Prince*, *St. Andrew*, and *London*, also three third-rates.

Chamberlayne says there were 9725 parishes (in England at this time), and allowing 80 families to each parish, there will be 778,000 families, to each family seven persons, there will be found in all 5,446,000 souls, and amongst them 1,000,000 of fighting men."



























Grinnell-Milne, G.

Life of Lieut.-Admiral de Ruyter

London 1896

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